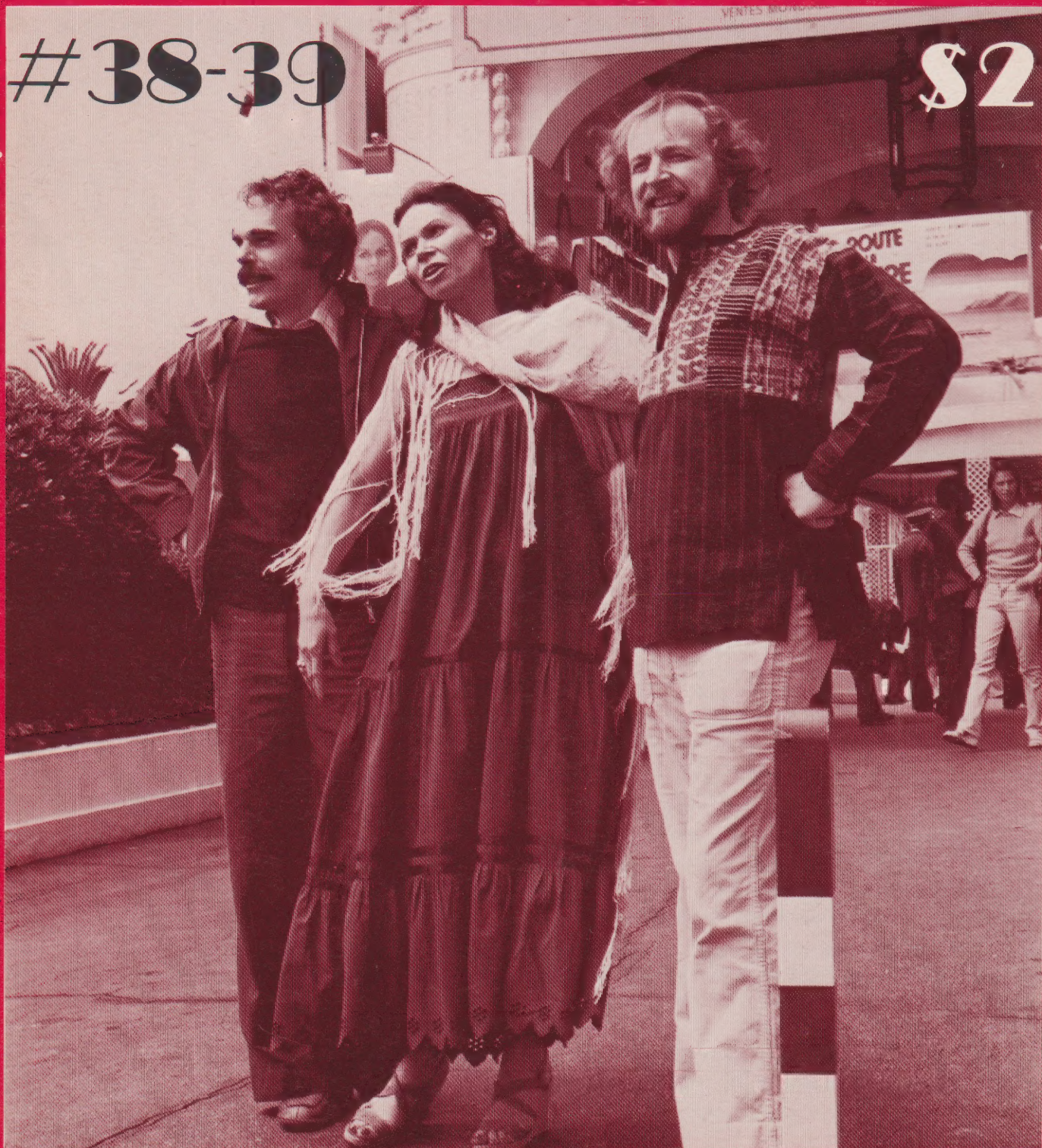


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Canadian Cinema and Culture: part two

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CONTENTS

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Jean Beaudin, director of **J.A. Martin photographe**, with stars Monique Mercure and Marcel Sabourin. The film won the International Ecumenical Prize at the Cannes Festival, and Monique Mercure walked away with the coveted award for the Best Feminine Interpretation, Cannes' jargon for best actress. Photo by Federico. See articles pp. 23-32.

AUG 30 1978	5	Reverb
	8	The Illustrated Film News
	21	Box Office Grosses
	23	Cannes 1977
Ronald H. Blumer	24	The Year of the Bourge
Connie Tadros	27	The Nitty Gritty
Marc Gervais	29	Of Cannes, Canada, Robin Spry and Roberto Rossellini
	36	Canadian Cinema and Canadian Culture: part two
Jack Gray	36	Glacial Movements
Douglas Bowie	38	A View from Nowhere
Douglas Ord	40	An Essay on Canadian (Film)
I. Birnie, T. Reif, J. -P. Bastien	45	Independent Views
P. Thorvaldson	50	Commercials as a Fine Art
	55	Opinions
	55	In and Outs of the Festivals by Austin Whitten
	56	Can the Canadian Film Industry Climb Out of Bankruptcy? by C.A. Brown
	58	Tech News by Rodger J. Ross
	61	Rough Cut by Robert Rouveroy
	64	Organizations
	66	Book Reviews: <i>Movies and Mythologies</i> reviewed by Jim Purdy, <i>Changing</i> reviewed by Lee Rolfe
	71	Film Reviews J.A. Martin photographe by Jean Beaudin Ragtime Summer by Alan Bridges
	73	Reviews of Short Films

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by

Natalie Edwards

August 1978

At Film House... Everything counts, even the orange juice.

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to keep everyone up to date. For color negative stocks particularly, our 16mm wet-gate facility is proving a boon to producers. In the sound department, we're mixing to $\frac{3}{4}$ " video cassettes, we're transferring dailies overnight, and we offer five of the best mixers in the country, with a choice of three theatres.

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The Reader Implies

In your recent editorial "it's time to take a stand", you make reference to the production **Leopard In The Snow**. You imply that Harlequin forced the omission of the Canadian producer's name from the film's credit. In fact, the credit was omitted at my request. You should have taken the time to contact me in this regard instead of speculating incorrectly. I realize that such a move would have eliminated one of the shafts from your quiver but don't you think that the pursuit of accuracy is worth it?

I believe that the proper application of co-production treaties is vital to the future of our industry. I know as well as anyone about the benefits and failings of the U.K./Canada treaty and still believe it is worthwhile nurturing. You have every right to take an opposite point of view, but please apply the principles of responsible journalism to build an accurate argument rather than using speculation or hearsay.

Gilbert W. Taylor

**President
Intercom Films Limited**

Cinema Canada neither implied nor speculated. A simple statement of fact was made, no more, no less. We did state, however, that Canadian producers should be in full control of their films, be they co-productions or not.

Perhaps the pertinent question now is, why would a Canadian producer request that his name be omitted from the credits of his film? Ed.

Free Not NFB

Thank you for reviewing **Home Free** in issue number 36. There were, however, two factual errors in the review that we would like to correct.

1. **Home Free** is being distributed in Canada by the International TeleFilm Enterprises and not by the National Film Board. The NFB helped us to launch the film, but are not actually involved in the distribution.
2. The photograph used in the article that you identified as Mai Lyn Quan was really that of Yuet Ngor Lau, a 78-year-old lady, who played the grandmother in the film. Mai Lyn Quan is actually a ten-year-old girl who played one of the leads.

Two things that have happened recently with **Home Free** – CBC children's television has purchased it for a play this summer, and **Home Free** is in the finals of the American Film Festival in New York.

Sincerely yours

Glen Salzman

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THE ILLUSTRATED NEWS

THE WEATHER

Consult
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page 36

Vol. 1, no. 5



Sandra Gathercole at work last year

CCFM: Gathercole Steps Down

The reaction, among supporters and opponents alike, to Sandra Gathercole's resignation as chairperson of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers, is remarkable in its unanimity.

Gathercole, who announced her retirement at the annual CCFM meeting held in Toronto in June, was chairperson for two and a half years, and remains on the executive of CCFM as an individual member.

Director Allan King, highlights the response within the film and media community to Gathercole's efforts on behalf of CCFM and the Canadian production industry. "I've had," King says, "the privilege over twenty years of filmmaking of working with many dedicated, tenacious, hard-working,

imaginative people, and people of considerable humanity, and I haven't worked with anyone who has impressed me more than Sandra has; at every stage I've seen her working with always a resilience, a resourcefulness, a ... means of accommodating the various different interests that the Council represents."

David Crane, editorial page editor of the *Toronto Star*, remarks that he has found Gathercole to be "one of the most articulate and best informed people that we have dealt with in the community."

"We've always been impressed," Crane says, "with the way she presents a case, with the level of research she does, and with the fact that when she speaks on an is-

sue, she is never speaking off the top of her head. And so while you may disagree with the sort of conclusions she comes to, or accept them, you can't quarrel with the fact that she knows what she's talking about."

Actor-producer-director Al Waxman, star of the CBC *King of Kensington* series, remarks that CCFM has, under Gathercole's leadership, given the industry "a sense, as much as it has ever had, of unity."

"I was at a meeting of the producers' association CAMPP — Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers the other night," adds Waxman, "and I came away from that meeting very glad for the efforts of CCFM. Don't get me wrong: I'm very much in favor of producers in a sense leading the industry, but one had the feeling that these 15 or so producers were totally unaware that there were 5,000 other people in the industry..."

"Although I would sometimes quarrel with the political maneuvering and political thoughts, I would certainly never quarrel with the fact of her dedication or with the fact that under her leadership there seems to have become an awareness of the whole of the craft and talent that makes an industry."

Victor J. Beattie, who as president of the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association (which, its name notwithstanding, is dominated by American distributors), is politically across the fence from Gathercole, comments that "I would imagine they'll miss her, that's about the most obvious thing. I would wish her luck with whatever she does."

And George Destounis, president of Famous Players, asks, "What can you say but credit the girl? It's a fact. The girl did a credible job."

Speaking for herself, Gathercole emphasizes the new context in which the Canadian film industry has come to be perceived in recent years, and discusses the role CCFM has played in creating that context, both before and during her years as chairperson.

"I think what's happened," says Gathercole, "in the last three or four years — and

I think CCFM is primarily but not solely responsible for what's happening – is that the entire context of what's going on in film has changed, vis-à-vis American control.

"I think that it is the first time in 50 years that there has been a serious and sustained challenge to the American right to control the money-making part of the industry in this country and thereby to really prevent an indigenous – at least an indigenous feature industry – from existing.

"I think the sense that we have a right to a place in our own market is pretty pervasive now – and it wasn't, really, a few years ago."

During the past year, a topic which has been a major preoccupation for Gathercole and CCFM has been pay-TV. An intensive research effort culminated in the release in April of *Pay-TV in Canada* a 400-page report which recommends the phasing in of what would be a universal pay-TV system using existing cable facilities. The revenues generated would go to Canadian production rather than to capitalization of expensive new hardware.

"We have, per capita," says Gathercole, "the most expensive and extensive communications highways in the world in this country ... and what they carry is another

country's product. The problem now is not to build an even more expensive new delivery system to deliver more American product. The problem now is to use the existing delivery system... and put on it our own presence."

As she has in the past, Gathercole continues to stress the larger political context in which filmmaking occurs in Canada. In a personal observation at the annual meeting, she said that "We've got to, whether we like it or not, accept the fact that public policy is an essential element – and a very critical element – in making the film industry work."

She describes the kinds of public policies in effect as "totally unsatisfactory," and adds that voluntary agreements in the feature industry are "attempts on the part of the Americans to make themselves look like good corporate citizens – they're buy-offs to what we're pressing for."

Gathercole also stresses the cultural context in which filmmaking occurs: "There are cultural reasons," she says, "why you have to have your own medium of communication – in the broadest sense of cultural, not 'cultural' cultural, but cultural survival... and I think that's what the problem is in the film industry ... where you've got

a lot of people who've made their living for 50 years as agents of an American system, and who honestly don't see what the problem is. And viewed in a certain economic context, it makes sense. Viewed in terms of having a culture here it doesn't make any sense at all."

From her experience (she's been writing briefs since 1971), however, Gathercole has concluded that substantive changes are likely to come for a long time.

"I have learned patience to a certain extent," she commented at the CCFM meeting, "and I think I've learned what all good Canadians have to learn, which is to read the glacial movement ... I think there is a glacial movement."

Why is she resigning? "Because I'm exhausted," says Gathercole, who adds that a change-over would also be helpful to CCFM.

"If the same people remain," she says, "– and there has been an amazing consistency on that executive since CCFM was formed – then I think it tends to be seen as the same old people, which is not good. I think it's important that it evolve and move on."

Jaan Pill

CBC for Action

At the CRTC hearings into Pay-TV in Ottawa in June, CBC President Al Johnson took the opportunity to move onto the offensive and into the broader sphere of Canadian TV and radio as a whole. He called his statement "The CBC Action Plan" or "Touchstone for the CBC".

"We in the CBC," he said, "have failed to play our proper leadership role in the national battle for Canadianism – for our national heritage." He chastised successive governments and their agencies for failing to provide the policies and funding necessary to safeguard Canadian culture through broadcasting. To rectify that failure – and surpass goals laid out by the CRTC at the last CBC license renewal in 1974 – he proposed his action plan: Canadianisation of English-Language TV by reducing foreign content in prime time, broadening of French TV, more reflection of network and vice-versa, regionalism, more AM and better FM radio programming, a second cable TV network run by the CBC with all-Canadian programming, and making the CBC fully open and responsive.

Johnson maintained that such expansion can be financed with

revenues already promised, but emphasized that supporting Canadianism means spending money. He described our current crisis as two-fold: strong arguments over our nationhood, and relentless American cultural penetration. The latter is

of utmost importance, says Johnson. U.S. influence in broadcasting is being described in the same terms as fifty years ago. We haven't moved anywhere; in fact the "triple national failure of policy, funding and will power to protect our culture has allowed and indeed invited the American electronic rape of that culture, particularly in English Canada... As cable TV spreads across the country, the proportion of Canadian to American programming goes down."

All is not lost, however. He compared prime time viewing ten years ago and now; before it was virtually foreign. And cited the crucial decision to get more ad income by buying American instead of developing Canadian. And then he pointed to Quebec, where reducing American programs hasn't resulted

in smaller audiences, but larger ones. And he put it all in the context of the technological explosion now on, citing TV as the best tool for cultural – and therefore political-survival as a nation. Our culture, he said, is our mosaic of identities. CBC contributes to national unity by examining the diversity of the country (a definition not in line with Trudeau's concept of 'contributing to national unity').

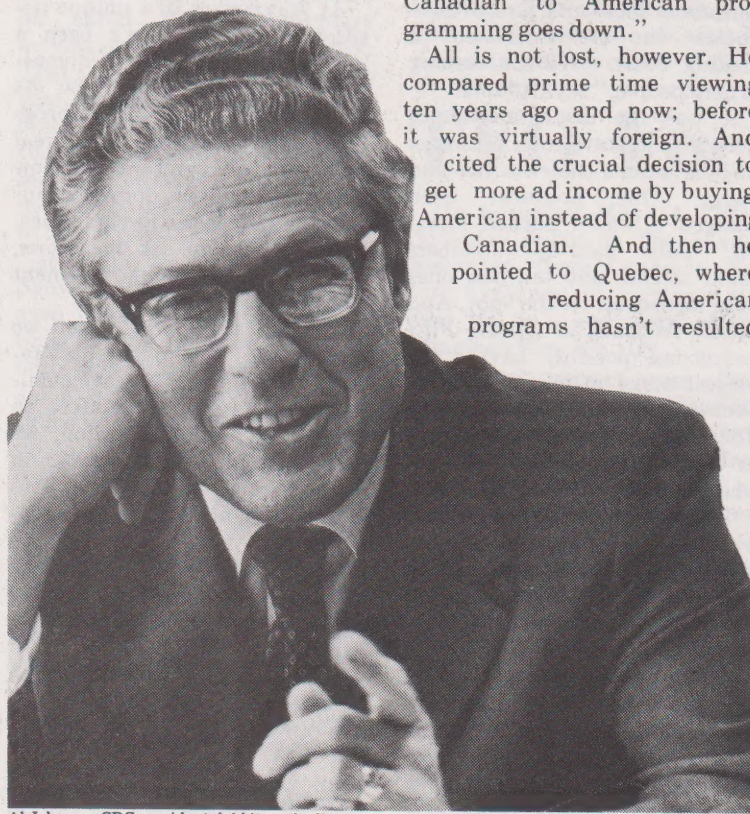
We must develop talent to a greater extent, cut down on the amount of sports and program it more effectively, and develop stars.

And in a vocal way, along with his board of directors, and surely arising out of continuous travel and discovery of discontent about the CBC, Johnson pledged his own efforts. He said, "The hottest place in Hell is reserved for responsible authorities who, in times of crisis, remain cautious and circumspect. I have no intention of going down to that place, and there is absolutely no way I'm going to be circumspect in the cultural struggle of our nation."

"You develop a culture with passion not passivity. In this plan... I am going to be as fighting, aggressive, bold, loud, and honestly nationalistic as I am capable of being."

No CBC president ever spoke in such a forceful way about culture before. Will Johnson get his chance to follow through?

Stephen Chesley



Al Johnson, CBC president, laid it on the line

The Heat's On In The CAMPPfire

It began as a small brouhaha over what turned out to be a misquote in a foreign trade paper. It ended with the Canadian Motion Picture Producers unequivocally endorsing the present co-production philosophy, despite vocal opposition from a few of its members. That philosophy – take the money and run – is coming under increasing fire from both the government and the industry at large.

During that hectic and rainy Cannes gathering in May, CAMPP President David Perlmutter gave an interview in *Screen International* in which he was quoted as saying that for Canadian films the CFDC is thinking of insisting on either the writer or director being Canadian regardless of points. And that the same criteria would apply to co-productions too. Since Perlmutter (along with Paul Siren of ACTRA) is an advisor to the CFDC about co-productions, there was great consternation at his implication that co-productions might have to use Canadian talent.

The response in Canada was swift. A meeting was called to chastise, if not depose Perlmutter. He was in London, after Cannes, and was not present at the meeting. It did turn out, however, that he was misquoted on the co-production statement, so his image was untainted. He retains his positions at CAMPP and as CFDC advisor, and says only, "I think some people became overly upset at situations. It has been straightened out."

The producers knew all was safe with co-productions because Joe Beaubien of the CFDC was there to tell them so. And the Perlmutter episode was really only a small part of the discussion, and came at the end. The central area of concern was trying to define, virtually as policy, what the producers wanted from co-productions. The answer: money.

Of course it's not that simple. Says one participant who opposes such a mercenary attitude, "I don't really blame them, in a way. If, after all these lean years, some guy pays them \$25,000 to visit an office a few times and push some paper around, they take it. These guys, if Hollywood called, would go running."

But some producers, though not many, want more than a paper depository in the north. Few were at the meeting. Beaubien spoke about co-productions and then asked for discussion; it was also evident that most of the producers were not fully aware of the details of the trea-



Chalmers Adams wanting to help

ty, so the meeting was described as an educational process. The problems of delays in approvals and wide discretion in administration were promised rectification. A committee of five members of CAMPP – Perlmutter, Victor Solnicki, Julian Melzack, Denis Héroux, and Chalmers Adams as chairman – was formed to advise and assist local and foreign producers who are interested in making deals. "We are seeking to help people," says Adams.

It was the discussion about the current state and future of co-productions that was hot and heavy. One producer even charged it was a packed meeting: only paid-up members could attend, and ten new ones were signed up on the spot. And Julian Melzack of Classic Film Industries, possibly having the biggest stake in current co-productions, supplied the edibles. The proceedings were described as not 'parliamentary' by one who attended.

The essence of the debate was whether co-productions are leading to a healthy industry or not. Most felt that they are an opportunity for production and we should keep them as they are. But a small group said they reduce the chance of Canadian input on any level: there's no theme input through the writer or creative input, through the director, and producers are just

nothing." A suggestion that Canadian creative or theme input alternate with foreign was rejected; heightening Canadian ideas was soundly rejected.

The most unlikely producers were forced into almost nationalist positions. One who agreed to discuss the co-production situation in general is Harry Gulkin. "I'm the surprised one to sound so nationalistic. I brought in a foreign director and I believe we need international pictures and I want co-productions too. But we can't be making pictures for the British and French and Yanks. We'll just disappear in the long run. Co-productions are moving to the exclusion of Canadian participation and Canadian production."

"The commercial is necessary, but that's all co-productions are now, and that's not enough. You need a commitment to the industry and the country. But you can't tell investors what to invest in and they like being around the Carlo Ponti's."

"What happens with co-productions depends on the CFDC and the Secretary of State. If it's left to the CAMPP it'll be the same as it is now. We've kissed American asses and look what we've got. Now we are going through the British, Italians and French. Now it's just a gallery of asses to kiss."

Why not fight, I asked another producer. "Because", he said, "most of CAMPP can't deny reality; they've sold out already."

Al Waxman is in a unique position right now. He's been a producer and director of domestic and foreign properties. As Kensington's king he's recognised everywhere and has real pressure to represent a show that is aimed at domestic audiences but seeks foreign sales. I called him to ask his views, and he added some pertinent comments to the debate.

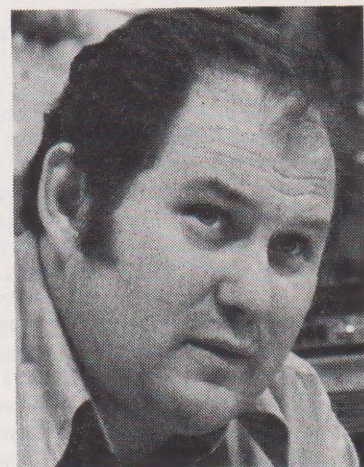
"I don't know why, when we have access to funding and talent, both precious to have available, and we are therefore in such a fortuitous situation, we don't exploit others instead of serving ourselves up for exploitation. I'm not one of your nationalists who goes around waving flags all over, but we need a sense of balance: show-business and entertainment, yes, but also a sense of country."

"We are in a position to make others dance to our tune. We can use our money when we want to, not just through foreign sanction. Certain formulas have to be met, it's true, but we can do

it on our terms. It needs confidence and belief – but not blind belief – in what we're doing. You can be a good entrepreneur and help the community. And everyone's looking for money and we've got it. Why run across the ocean?"

"You can't lay down, spread your legs and yell rape. I can't criticize those who take American money but there's more to it than that. We have to compete in the world, and to do so we need confidence in our own talent. The more confidence in our talent we have, the less fear we'll have of importing foreign talent."

"I'm trying to be a star to start a trend. I want to produce and direct, and I'd like to be able to go to a bank and say I've this Canadian star or that, now finance me because the people out there want to see them. And I don't deny reality; on a \$3 million dollar picture it may be difficult to package most Canadian directors. But if you can't sell Canadians for a picture that costs \$800,000 to a million, you're no good as a producer, and you don't believe in the property."



Al Waxman doesn't yell rape

"You can't deny where you came from, it'll show up in your work. If I'm not Canadian, I'll just be wishy washy in the world."

Ultimately, however, co-productions will be revised, in some way. "And it's a good thing, too", says one producer at the meeting, "that such policy comes from the secretary of State, who represents a larger constituency than just CAMPP." The whole industry is affected. Nor do producers function as the protectors of investors' dollars; that's done by Acts of Parliament, not CAMPP. And that's in whose laps the whole co-production situation now sits.

Stephen Chesley

Pay TV - Anyone Listening?

The Pay-TV hearings were held in the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. Money and power were at stake, a fact reflected by the presence of a full slate of CRTC Commissioners. The topic was those long-awaited hearings into Pay-TV, still described by some as the saviour of the Canadian production industry.

But production was rarely mentioned. In fact, says one observer, nobody really knows what production is except Harry Boyle and the departed Pierre Juneau. The only group that offered specific dollar benefits to the Canadian industry — the Pay Television Network proposal of 15% of revenue — was not successful in making a good impression. It brought Canadian producers Budge Crawley, Harry Gulkin, and newly-returned to the land of gold Norman Sedawie, to tell the CRTC why the PTN proposal was best. Sedawie said he liked the proposal but that cable companies couldn't be trusted to produce properly; strike one. Then Budge Crawley was asked about the role of the CBC, NFB and other government film bodies in Pay-TV. Crawley said, as he has many times in the past, that the government should get out of filmmaking and only act as a bank; all those agencies should be closed down. Since the role and presence of the CBC, NFB and such are important in PTN's proposal, strike two.

No, most of the discussion was about carrying systems and about how urgent the need for the service really is.

Boyle re-iterated that Sauv  s "inevitable" doesn't mean immediate; he wants to be sure. Among the proposals discussed orally — the CRTC received 181 written ones — were Western Coded TV's offer for over-UHF transmission with a scrambler/decoder so everyone has access; a Crown Corporation with transmission via CN/CP and satellite with the price based on average cost per household; pay per show with Bell Canada equipment now available; advertiser participation so that enough production money can be generated; and (possibly the one brief that

made a good impression) a joint proposal from the CCFM (not effective in its own separate appearance), Consumers Association of Canada and twenty-seven others calling for a non-government, non-profit company to own and administer Pay TV, with 85% of revenue to programming and 15% to delivery, thus employing facilities already built.

Timing was also discussed; the mood suggested waiting, either because the costs are too great, or the broadcast system would fragment further, or siphoning from established outlets would occur. Only Rogers Cable of Toronto wanted a fast go-ahead, mainly because Network One in Toronto has wired an apartment building for Pay-TV where it has the cable franchise; he's afraid they'll get more (although if they join two buildings they come under CRTC jurisdiction, and the CRTC would close them down. Now they're classified as closed circuit TV and are licensed by the Ontario Theatres Branch.).

What was usually left out was examination of Canadian content proposals. PTN says 15% to domestic production or \$15 million dollars, which is enough for about 20 or twenty-five movies, counting private money. That's out of 100 showings a year, or 20-25% Canadian content. The broadcasters go further and want no content quota, mostly because their commercial outlets are now subject to higher quotas than they like.

It won't be a fast decision. Sauv   has backed off, saying she even favors the inquiry into all broadcasting proposed by Roberts and quietly by Boyle and Johnson. That'll postpone everything for two years and it takes up to two years to build a system. Even the cable guys are angry with her for Bill C-43 (the new broadcasting regulations) and for backing of Pay-TV.

And the CRTC is in disarray. Commissioner John Hylton and executive secretary Guy Lefebvre are leaving. Harry Boyle talks retirement with a likely successor in Andr   Fortier.

It now rests with Cabinet.

Stephen Chesley

Columbia : Guilty

In a courtroom in Toronto's Old City Hall Columbia Pictures Industries appeared on June 9 to face charges of price-fixing at one suburban Toronto theatre last year. The company pleaded guilty and was fined \$1250; Columbia agreed to never repeat the offence and said that it would notify all those with whom it does business that company policy is not to influence prices. The trial lasted about one-half hour; it was that long because of haggling over how much the fine should be.

It was a small case, but the repercussions could be great. Actually it grew out of the CCFM initiated inquiry into market practices in the film industry in early 1976. The Combines Investigation Branch of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has been working on the prevailing modes of doing business, and this was the first in what is expected to be a series of charges.

Originally both Columbia Pictures and Canadian General Manager Harvey Harnick were charged with an offence under section 38 of the Combines Investigation Act, that in 1976 "on or about the 23rd of March the defendants unlawfully did influence upward the price of admission at the Bijou Theatre in Scarborough." Columbia alone was charged with doing the same as another suburban Toronto theatre, The Fireside in Malton. The charge was possible only because of amendments to the Combine Act in

January 1976 that brought services under Combines jurisdiction.

Bijou owner Charles Knapp had booked Columbia's **Jack and the Beanstalk** into his theatre for Easter break, and it was playing simultaneously with the Odeon Chain. First grosses were disappointing so Knapp lowered the adult matinee price from \$3.25 to \$1.00. A patron complained to Odeon about the price difference and Odeon called Harnick who called the independent booker and then Knapp, and told him to restore the original price. Knapp complied because he feared losing future Columbia product.

The case was discovered when Combines investigators raided all distributors last June; a letter was found from Harnick to Columbia's Dutch Levit prohibiting future simultaneous booking unless the admission price is previously agreed upon.

Charges were laid against Columbia and Harnick. Plea bargaining reduced Columbia's charges from two to one and threw Harnick's charges out. The fine was low despite the Crown Attorney's description of Columbia's huge profits and despite case precedents that implied a much higher fine in this case. Columbia had also claimed confusion over application of the new Combines amendment, and the judge seemed to accept that, even though the change had been under discussion for years.

TVO Focus on Film

On Saturday May 14 TVO's *Saturday Night at The Movies* presented three Canadian feature films and 13 guests to discuss the in's and out's of the Canadian film industry.

Features shown were Paul Lynch's **The Hard Begins**, Clarke Mackey's **The Only Thing You Know**, and **The Heat Wave Lasted Four Days**, an NFB feature directed by Doug Jackson. The special ran six hours, beginning at 8:00 pm. The program received a special grant from the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation.

Guests included producer Derrett Lee, director Peter Rowe, critic Kirwan Cox, J. Douglas McCullough of the Ministry of Culture, directors Clarke Mackey, Joyce Wieland, John Trent

and Doug Jackson. The final discussion concerned financing and distribution and the panel consisted of Famous Players President George Destounis, Mickey Stevenson of Astral, Orval Fruitman of Cinepix, and the CFDC's Ted Rouse.

Sweating it out in *Heatwave*



Strike Deadline Passes

CBC-ACTRA Talk

May 31st was a crucial day in the on-going battle between the CBC and the Association of Canadian Radio and Television Artists (ACTRA). It was final ultimatum strike day.

The union membership had rejected the CBC-ACTRA agreement for the second time this year – and the contract covers 1976-77; negotiations for 77-78 haven't even begun – and since the two sides have already agreed on money terms – 13% increase – there's over one million dollars sitting there for retroactive payment.

But this time the issues, and the various factions within ACTRA, came further into focus. Although the agreement was defeated 877 to 630 (out of 5,000 eligible to vote) and the ACTRA executive rushed into a meeting on May 6th to threaten woe to the CBC on May 31, the issue wasn't only the importation of foreign talent, as it seemed in the winter rejection. There is more under discussion.

Foreign talent seems to be a concern of a militant group of Toronto members, many of whom are employed less than the busy ACTRA performers, who work almost constantly; it's the latter the CBC refers to when it says "suitable Canadians were not available". But even Toronto writer members feel much of the foreign fracas is rubbish, and 128 signed a petition to the executive saying no 'strike' without a referendum. One petitioner commented that the CBC's using 4 or 5% foreign talent is nothing to get upset about, and that the CBC shouldn't be singled out.

Out west the members disagree vehemently with the Toronto militants' stand on foreign usage, especially in B.C. Current affairs problems are more pressing.

The national president and executive acknowledged the diversity of concern when they sent their ultimatum to CBC Vice-President of English Language Networks Don McPherson. ACTRA called for a stop to undermining of the agreement by the CBC through the Corporation's improper contracting or not contracting writer/performers. No more should producers be allowed to do the

work of freelancers. The recent Revenue Canada reclassification of contract employees means that they must receive benefits equal to CBC staff, since they have lost all freelancing privileges. More productions and more regional productions must be produced.

In the matter of foreign talent, the CBC must give Canadians preference, including the right to audition before foreigners. The CBC must require all non-ACTRA members to get a work permit from ACTRA offices and ACTRA reserves the right to grant or deny them.

The CBC wants to use foreigners when co-productions are involved (ACTRA says okay); when suitable Canadians are not available at a specific time and a production can't be postponed; when the production would be enriched by a particular foreigner.

But ACTRA doesn't trust the CBC over definitions of "suitable" and "enrich". The union cites the case of *The Making of the President 1944*, in which two Americans starred, an American directed, and an American was called in to rewrite original author Morley Torgov's script. And adds ACTRA President Donald Parrish, "We aren't depriving Canadians of these foreigners. They can be seen on nineteen other channels every night."

"We have a right to preference because it's a public system. We support the CBC despite our differences. We still think they're the only network in Canada doing anything of value."

Perhaps it's the heat of the moment, when everyone seems to be jumping on the CBC. ACTRA writers head Jack Gray sees a danger in such a situation. He says both sides must unite to fight the decimation of the CBC now going on. Adds Parrish, "We want evidence that we can trust them."

The strike – or really 'withholding of services' – was averted at the last minute when both sides agreed to re-open negotiations. They sat down again in late June, and they're still sitting.

Stephen Chesley

Release Roundup

Bernard B. Sauermann's 16 mm film portrait of W.S. Kater, called *Harpsichord Builder*, was shown at Toronto's Ciné Lumière Theatre in May... In a unique case, that horror hit you've been seeing ads for, *It's Alive*, is being distributed by a Canadian company, Dabara Films of Toronto. It's a Warner Brothers effort, and it's the first time the company has sold the rights to an in-house film to a separate company in Canada. The line-ups, says general manager Sharon Singer, are as long in Canada as elsewhere... *Rabid*, David Cronenberg's latest effort from Cinepix, is being distributed in the U.S. by Roger Corman's New World Pictures. It opened in 200 houses in June and July. Pic did \$100,000 gross in first ten days in Montreal – in both languages... *Jacob Two Two Meets the Hooded Fang* was shown at the White House. Pic is scheduled to open in Canada in the Fall...

Ragtime Summer had a gala preem in Peterborough, Ontario, near where it was filmed. Most of the leads are foreign, but the Canadians were there, and they arrived under an array of spotlights, perched in antique automobiles, on the old red carpet. Early box office was disappointing however, as the pic played across the country in Odeon houses... *Leopard in the Snow* is a Harlequin-based feature, and the company is aiming for the market that reads its books. So, a campaign strategy will consist of a great predominance of the Harlequin name, and bookings that are consciously plan-

ned to favor the women devotees of Harlequin fiction. Matinees are considered prime time. The idea is to bring the women's picture, and its audience, back to theatres... *Death Weekend* has been released in the U.S. as *The House by the Lake*...

Love at First Sight, by Rex Bromfield and featuring Dan Akroyd, is being distributed by Astral in Canada. Company opened the pic in one theatre in Toronto with some trepidation; previews had evoked excellent response but would it hold out until the needed word-of-mouth could spread? The second weekend was bigger than the first at Toronto's Uptown, and at our press time it's still going strong, so further openings across the country are now planned... *Why Shoot the Teacher* opened in Toronto and Ottawa to rave reviews. Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Red Deer and Hanna (where it was filmed) are to follow...

Mahoney's Last Stand finally surfaced in theatres. It was made five years ago, went way over budget so it could not be completed, was edited and re-edited, bought and sold, until this spring and summer actor/writer/producer Alexis Kanner is seeing his creation up there on screen. It played in Montreal last spring, and then in Calgary and Toronto for a week, probably just to satisfy quota statistics. Even director Harvey Hart was shocked to see it; he has disavowed all association with the film, and wanted his name taken off, but was too late in his attempt to do so.

Jacob comforts Louie Loser in *Two Two*



Productions Taking Off Everywhere

A Canada-French co-production, **Blood Relations**, is now before the cameras in Montreal. Canadian producer is Julien Melzack's Classic Film Industries with Denis Héroux's Cinevideo. French partner is Filmel of Paris.



Julien Melzack

Claude Chabrol is directing the feature in English. It's based on a novel by Ed McBain (Evan Hunter) about what happens when a detective investigates the murder of seventeen-year-old girl. It seems that she had family problems – and so does our investigator. Surprise endings are planned.

Stephane Audran, Donald Sutherland and Jodie Foster are in the cast.

Foreign producers shooting

This summer will see at least three or four foreign productions located in Toronto, adding to an already busy scene.

David Susskind's Talent Associates, who maintain permanent offices in Toronto because they do so much shooting here, are planning one or two features, probably aimed for TV. Currently in production is **Grampa and Frank**, starring Henry Fonda and a large Canadian cast. A possibility is **Say It Isn't So, Joe**, about the Chicago White Sox scandal of 1919.

Francis Coppola is producing a feature set to use Toronto locations. The film is **The Black Stallion**, and Jockey Club facilities are booked for July and August. Apparently Coppola and director Carol Ballard searched all over until they could find the right horses in Toronto.

Superman, that international epic, will base in Toronto and Calgary for part of its seven-month shooting schedule. Kingston and Niagara Falls are Ontario sites, and the sub-con-

tractor is Henning Jacobsen. Don Buchsbaum is overseeing Canadian operations and working with Calgary, where three weeks are possibly planned.

Ivan Reitman is tentatively planning to shoot his film of the National Lampoon show – which he produced on stage – in Toronto this fall... if he can appease the displeasure of University of Toronto officials over his risqué script.

Peter Rowe's long-planned feature, **Stuntman**, has an August start date. Shooting is planned for Toronto and Petta-wawa, Ontario, where there's whitewater river as exciting as the Colorado for the exciting climax in ten-foot waves.

The story concerns an international collection of stuntmen shooting a script under the direction of an American ramrod. Latter is reckless and life is further complicated by the arrival of his son. Both want the same stuntwoman. "It's forty-five minutes of action stunts and forty-five minutes of character," says Rowe.

Barry Pearson and Rowe wrote the script, Rowe will direct, executive producer is David Perlmutter, and Allan King will produce if other commitments allow him to. Elizabeth Shepherd has been cast, and Lloyd Bridges may play the male lead. Astral or Cinepix may distribute and possibly put some money in.



Peter Rowe

The film will be shot in Techniscope, a process used often in Europe but only by Claude Fournier in Canada. It's a Technicolor invention in which two-sprocket 35 mm is used and then blown up to four-sprocket, and is anamorphic. It has the versatility of 16 mm with the quality of 35. Cinefilms of Montreal is supplying equipment, and possibly personnel.

John Board and Doug Dales of P.S. Productions in Toronto plan to become feature producers, and they have three projects in the planning stages.

Possession is a horror tale by writer/director John Stoneman. **The Last Canadian** is a spy thriller based on the book by William Heine.

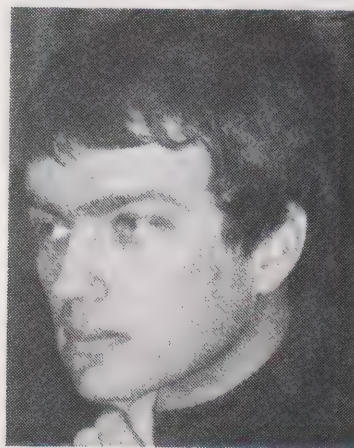
The Wooden Elephant is a co-production with Tony Kramreither's Burg Productions. Scheduled for a fall shoot, its a thriller set in Chinatown to be written and directed by Morley Markson. Script consultant is Lewis Meltzer and it was conceived by Richard Kurtz and John Board. Design is by Jack McAdam. Ambassador will distribute.

Foreign sales for all productions will be through Quadrant Films.

Coup d'Etat back

August 1st is the scheduled start date for **Coup d'Etat**, an international thriller to be shot in Toronto and toplining Peter O'Toole. Other casting hadn't been finalized at press deadline, but the film is definitely on.

Martyn Burke originally had the project as a CBC/Quadrant production two years ago, but it fell through, and now Chris Dalton's Magnum International



Chris Dalton

has revived it and obtained all rights. Burke is writer and director, executive producer is Bob Cooper (the Ombudsman on CBC) and Chris Dalton will produce. John Eckert is associate producer and Prudence Emery will handle publicity.

One Night Stand a CBC/King co-production

Allan King's production company and the CBC have com-

bined forces to present Carol Bolt's hit stage play **One Night Stand** on screen. It's now in production in Toronto.

It's being shot in 35 mm for theatrical release, and the CBC will obtain broadcast rights. King is producing and directing, and Bolt wrote the screenplay. The original stage cast repeats their parts, with Dinah Christie added to the film.

Chapelle Jaffe plays a young Toronto bank teller who picks up a guy at a disco on her birthday. From there the comedy and then thriller and then tragedy unfolds. Brent Carver plays the guy.

Daryl Duke to direct in Toronto

The Silent Partner is a feature to begin shooting for seven weeks in Toronto from August 22. Daryl Duke is to direct the comedy caper pic, with a cast including Elliot Gould, an as-yet-unsigned American female lead, and Christopher Plummer.

It's based on a Danish novel by Anders Bodelson called *Think of a Number*, and the screenplay is by American Curtis Hanson. Oscar Peterson will write the score. Producers of the \$2.5 million certified Canadian feature are Stephen Young, Joel Michaels, and Garth Drabinsky. The CFDC may invest. Karen Hazard is casting.

Toronto-based Nielsen-Ferns continues to produce actively on several fronts, and one of the first projects will be under the supervision of veteran Rose McLean, recently signed by N-F on a contract basis. McLean will produce **Eddie and Me**, a Canadian film probably starring Jeff Lynas and which was to have been directed by Don Shebib. Shebib, however, is working on another project for N-F. A fall shoot is planned.

Eric Till has been active at the company. He's developing an idea of his for a feature to be done along with Allan Pater, with whom he's worked in England. Called **Malice**, it's almost a melodrama or Canadian gothic, a good old-style plot twisting horror film, but based on a true Canadian incident, according to Till and N-F.

Stephen Chesley



Production Plans

Ambassador Films is still planning to produce its Anglo-Canadian co-production **Sherlock Holmes and Saucy Jack** in London in mid-September. Bob Clark will direct and post-production will be in Toronto. Also set are **Cat People**, remake for fall, and possibly **The Phantom** for fall... Martin Lavut has a new film in process which he won't talk about, but which he'll write and direct. Larry Dane may produce and hopes to shoot this year... **Bridge of Love** is an Indian pic being shot at Oshawa's Canukr Studio. It's the first of a series of Hindu pics to be made in Canada in English, Canadian Robert Ryan is cinematographer...

Murray Markowitz is still working on his Mary Steinhäuser and Peter Demeter-type scripts... Another Demeter script, to use real names and to be shot next summer, is in process through the efforts of producer Jon Slan. He's lined up Barbara Amiel and George Jonas - who wrote the current volume on the case, *By Persons Unknown* - to write the script, and contracted as advisors assistant deputy attorney John Greenwood, Demeter lawyer Eddie Greenspan and Peel Regional Police. Budget is to be \$2 million... Gil Taylor is involved in the production of Frederick Forsyth's **Dogs of War**, with British producer John Woolf...

Teri McLuhan will produce and direct a feature about identical twins in Cape Breton this summer. Bob Linnell is production manager... Budge Crawley wants Carole Laure and Gilles Carle for his feature based on Fred Bodsworth's *The Strange One*. Crawley's been working on this for some time. He's spent \$150,000 so far and has now got a third screenplay by Michele Moses going. He's also optioned *Settlers of the Marsh* by Frederick Philip Grove, and plans to reissue the Brian Moore / Robert Shaw feature **The Luck of Ginger Coffey**... Ed Hunt and Barry Pearson are halfway through writing a script that's an underwater treasure story. They spent June doing research in Florida...

Paul Lynch will direct and Peter O'Brien produce with Quadrant a feature about circuit wrestling. Title is **Blood and Guts**, and shooting is set

for five weeks in the Toronto area, starting August 1st... Dennis Zahoruk has a new feature planned... Jack Darcus and Ty Haller are working on a script for feature shooting in Vancouver... John Trent is working on a feature project with William Stevenson (**A Man Called Intrepid**) based on a German who was a major figure in both world wars.

Elgin Productions sets projects

Just before he died, Richard Shouten joined with lawyer Victor Solnicki to produce features. Elgin Productions announced three projects, including David Cronenberg's next effort. The company will presumably continue without Shouten, although someone has to take his place, because Solnicki is a practicing lawyer as well as film packager.

Cronenberg is currently writing **The Brood**, with filming possible for fall in Toronto. It's a horror film, he says, but



David Cronenberg

very different from both **Shivers** and **Rabid**.

Elgin has **The Questor Wipeout** almost ready to go; it's an action adventure. And next spring they plan to shoot **The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne**, based on the novel by Brian Moore. It'll be an Anglo-Canadian co-production with British partner Jack Levin of Partus Productions (**England, Made Me**), Brian Friel will write the screenplay, Dan Petrie direct, and Liv Ullman will probably star.

The company is negotiating to re-patriate **A Whale for the Killing** and **A Man Called Intrepid**, with hopefully a co-production with Hollywood-based Lorimar for a mini-series for ABC or NBC.

Other Toronto notes

A new production company to make features has been formed by lawyers Norman Griesdorf and Sam Freeman and veteran filmmaker Julian Roffman... John Palmer is co-writing and will direct a feature called **Rich Kids**. He did the same for **Me...** Les Rose directed a feature in the spring in the city's east end. **Three Card Monte** is about a boy and a gambler, and all unknowns were used in the spring shoot... The CFDC has raised the low-budget program to \$160,000. Only two in each language will be made this year... Hollywood veteran producer Jackson Leichter breezed through Toronto and announced that he'll be back in January to make a feature with Film House and Magder Productions. Called **Blizzard**, it's set in Toronto and the Maritimes, and is about a group isolated in a hotel during a storm. It's based on the John Masters novel *Trial at Monomoy*... Kirwan Cox is working on a sequel to **Dreamland**, dealing with the Forties and especially Canada's very own Red Menace, which ripped through the NFB.

And from Montreal

Harry Gulkin plans a fall shoot for Bill Fruet's **The Dodo Bird**, and another project for next year... Julian Melzack's Classic Films has set up a deal with Britisher Michael Klinger for several Anglo-Canadian co-productions. Also involved is Rank Organisation. **Tomorrow Never Comes** will star Gregory Peck and Susan George and Peter Colkinson will direct. **Green Beach** is about the World War II Canadian raid on Dieppe. Also planned are **Restless**, **The Chilean Club**, and **Philby** with Michael Caine set to play the spy and which Dan Sharp will direct... **Two Solitudes**, based on the Hugh MacLennan novel, is being promoted by Judith Buckner and her Montreal-based Seagull Productions. Lionel Chetwynd wrote the script... **In Praise of Older Women** is back on the tracks, with George Kaczender directing the book by Stephen Viscenzy. Robert Lantos of Derma Productions and Jack Levin of Atlantic Films of London will co-produce this co-production. Shooting is set for this summer with some casting to be done in Toronto.

Stephen Chesley

B.C. Briefly

The B.C. government recently ran ads in the major newspapers requesting applications for the position of a Film Commissioner who would encourage international producers to make their movies in this province. The salary is good and Provincial Secretary Grace McCarthy has received a number of replies but as of this writing she has made no announcements.

The B.C. Film Industry Association has been pushing for a film commissioner for years now in the hopes that such a public servant could attract the much needed American dollars which would stimulate the local movie industry.

Seven Canadian features have played in Vancouver recently and most of those opened and closed quickly. Recent films include **Partners**, **The Little Girl Who Lived Down the Lane**, **The Clown Murders**, **Death Weekend**, **Sudden Fury** and **Bagtime Summer**.

All of these films opened during the slowest period of the movie season. The one



Traveling in *The Supreme Kid*

local movie was Peter Bryant's **The Supreme Kid** which did good business in Vancouver and subsequently opened for a short run in Victoria.

Gray Kyles

Federal Budget 1977: Tax Changes Affect Filmmaker

In his budget of March 31, 1977, the Federal Minister of Finance made changes to the Income Tax Act, some of which will have a bearing on filmmaking and related operations.

1. Inventory Adjustment

In recognition of the fact that inflation tends to erode profits, and in lieu of a more acceptable method of accounting for inflation, the government will allow all businesses, small or large, incorporated or not, to make a deduction, in calculating income, for each fiscal year commencing after December 31, 1977, of 3% of the opening value of qualifying inventories.

To qualify, the inventory must be tangible and moveable. Hence, masters and prints would qualify for the reduction, provided that they qualify as inventory for tax purposes. Basically, inventory is something which is acquired to be resold at a profit. Hence, masters which are being produced on contract (to be sold to the contractor upon completion) would appear to qualify. Similarly, prints which are being held for resale would qualify.

Given that inventory is quite often the largest item on a balance sheet, it may prove to be worth a long, hard look — planning possibilities are lurking here. For example, by planning to pass title on January 2nd, for those late-in-the-year contracts, significant savings may be effected. If the person contracting the film is not himself acquiring inventory, there should be no objections, since a capital asset can be acquired anytime during the year and still qualify for full capital cost allowance.

2. Corporate Surplus

If you run an incorporated business in the film industry, and this business has been in existence since before 1972, your corporation may well have significant amounts of what tax people call "old-system surplus". The distinguishing feature of old-system surplus, vis-à-vis new-system surplus, is that it may be paid out tax-free to shareholders. In some cases, a low 15% tax is required to free

up the surplus for payment — still, not a bad deal.

As a result of the budget, these special surplus accounts, on the stroke of midnight, December 31, 1978, will lose their special status, and will be distributable only as taxable dividends.

Some early action may prove to be beneficial. Remember — this only applies to corporations which existed prior to 1972.

3. Investment Tax Credit Extended

The government has in the past introduced incentives which attempt to stimulate capital investment, and, therefore, production. One such incentive was the investment tax credit, introduced in 1975 and due to expire on June 30 of this year.

At present, new buildings, machinery, and equipment which are acquired primarily for manufacturing or processing in Canada qualify for the credit. Basically, the credit works this way; in the year of acquisition, the taxpayer is allowed to deduct *directly from taxes otherwise payable* at 5% of the cost of the acquired property (within limits). Although the amount of the credit reduces the depreciable capital cost base of the asset, this credit system can result in a real saving to the filmmaker who is investing in substantial capital assets — just as was intended...

The hitch is that the assets had to have been acquired between June 30, 1975, and July 1, 1977. The new budget has extended this to July 1, 1980.

4. Employee Stock Option

The government has acknowledged that smaller, and particularly newer, companies often have trouble attracting and keeping skilled executives and craftsmen because these companies simply don't have the financial resources to pay competitive salaries. It would be nice to be able to attract these people with company stock.

However, under present laws, an employee is taxed on the difference between the fair market value of the stock and the

price at which the option allows him to buy the stock (presumably reduced, since this is what makes the compensation) as soon as he exercises his option, and at normal rates. Not much incentive here.

Hence, the budget defers taxing the employee until he *disposes* of the stock, which may be many years later. He will be taxed at capital gains (reduced) rates only on the difference between his selling price and his original option price.

The result will hopefully be that smaller, growing film companies will be able to hire needed talent, pay them well, get them to take part in the risk, and yet not impair the all-important working capital.

5. Business Expansions

Continuing on this track, in the past, whenever a business sold assets, any capital gain which resulted was subject to taxation, even if it was reinvested in similar assets: This quite often posed problems to companies which were moving from, say, a small downtown location to a larger space uptown.

The new budget provides that, to the extent that proceeds from asset sales are reinvested in similar assets, no gain will be taxable.

6. Capital Losses

The next provision is for the proprietors in the industry. Currently, \$1000 of accumulated capital losses can be offset against (reduced) income from other sources in any year. To further encourage investment in income-producing assets, this allowance has been increased to \$2000.

This means that, if you do make that move mentioned above, and you have to sell now-obsolete equipment at a loss, you can obtain the shelter/benefit of this loss twice as fast as you could have before.

It must seem obvious by now that the common strain in the above measures (except for the abolition of the special surplus categories) is the improvement of cash flow, the lubricant of the business world. These mea-

sures seem particularly favorable to the small, independent production companies and services. The following is a small exception.

7. Refunds and Late Payments

It used to be that if you filed your return on time (thereby avoiding late-filing penalties) but did not enclose a cheque for the balance due, you would be charged interest at 6% per annum on the outstanding balance. What this represented to many people was an automatic loan at quite a low rate of interest.

After the March 31, 1977, budget, late-payers will be charged the going prime rate charged by chartered banks.

Nelson Smith C.A.

Honor Down Under

The 24th Sydney Film Festival in Australia, which ran from May 29 to June 13, featured retrospectives of Canadian filmmakers **Don Owen** and **Robin Spry**. Both were present, as was the star of Owen's **Partners**, **Hollis McLaren**.

The Canadian presence was reinforced by **Andra Sheffer**, the official delegate and a member of the Film Festivals Bureau in Ottawa.

Armand Cournoyer was on hand from the CFDC, loaded down with some 45 cassettes of Canadian features which he was able to screen for 20 Australian distributors.

Spry, McLaren and Owen



CBC TIDBITS

John Hirsch is here, there and everywhere. Not exactly in the public consciousness, but the head of CBC drama is popping up all over.

He was one of ten guest panelists at the 10th Anniversary two-day colloquy on theatre, film and TV at the Mark Taper in Los Angeles in April.

On May 15th at Montreal's Place des Arts he received the Concert Society of Montreal Honorary Award for his contribution to Canadian Arts.

In June he received the annual Molson Prize of \$20,000, given to someone "whose work is judged an outstanding achievement in the arts, humanities or social sciences and contributes to national unity".

And currently he's discussing his future at the CBC. His contract expires next February, and he'll either remain as drama head or become a consultant and do some directing. With the return of John Kennedy to the drama department on August 1st - he's been in Quebec City for two years - as administrator, it's likely that Hirsch will take the consulting-cum-directing offer. Producers would probably prefer it that way.

'Connections' Connects

It's been a long time since any Canadian film or TV effort struck the public consciousness the way this show did - about twelve years, to be exact, since *This Hour has Seven Days* roused the MP's out of their somnambulant positions. Connections, the three-hour documentary on organised crime in Canada, and especially the foreign ties of crime - another branch plant - brought headlines, lawsuits and controversy.

The show was put together by Martyn Burke and Bill Macadam over a period of over a year. They used special lenses and equipment to pry, bug, bring out of hiding and generally place their subjects in position to hang themselves. The whole effort was backed by then-Current Affairs head Peter Herrndorf. The budget was certainly vast - some say over one million dollars, but \$300,000 is more like it - and Herrndorf gave the kind of commitment that is all too rare at the CBC.

In the end both Claude Wagner and John Reynolds threatened to sue the CBC. The immigration policies of the Liberal government were dealt another blow (for some reason the Liberals themselves were left relatively unscathed by the show). And best of all, the defensive and under-attack CBC created a positive image, an event all too rare in recent times.

Foreign Sales

The CBC Foreign Sales Division becomes more active all the time, even though the money is considered to be gravy and not included in budget estimates.

Recent sales include **What We Have Here is A People Problem** to Spain and Sweden; the same show and **Kathy Karuks is A Grizzly Bear**, both journalistic dramas, as well as a **Thousand Moons, Last of the**



A Thousand Moons

Four Letter Words, Honour Thy Father, Four-Day Wonder, all to Yorkshire TV, Austria brought thirteen *Beachcombers*. Ten *Collaborators* were sold to the Caribbean, and Italy bought **Welcome Stranger** and **Lighten My Darkness**. France purchased **Sarah, Sable Island**, and **Ice Lovers**. The latter also went to Sweden.

Nature of Things was sold to Finland, Italy and the Caribbean; **Musicamera** and **Giselle** to Guatemala, Nicaragua and the BBC, and **The World of Victor Herbert** to PBS. Russia bought the *One Northern Summer* series, Hungary the *In the South Seas* series, Denmark *The Desert* series and Taiwan *The Olympics* series.

On another front things aren't as rosy, although corrections are in the offing. When *King of Kensington* was sold in the U.S., most stations played it late at night and promoted as an Archie Bunker-type. It bombed. Now they'll try again, this time marketing it as a family drama/comedy that's positive and that's about what's good in people.

MPIC Goes

The newly-formed Motion Picture Institute of Canada is now occupied in arranging studies, seminars and setting up offices in Toronto, all with a goal of helping to create a stable industry for people to work in and to attract solid investment.

Recently-appointed Executive Secretary George Ritter says the group plans activities designed to disseminate knowledge, especially to independents in the production sector. Advertising and publicity seminars, studies of the industry in Canada to discover why there are so many different interests - from a **Far Shore** to a **Death Weekend** - as well as studies of industries in other countries such as Czechoslovakia and Australia are part of the Institute's projects.

A long-range goal is a special seminar, tentatively scheduled for Banff next January. "It'll be very basic," says Ritter. "We'll get about fifteen Canadian producers and directors together, invite tax people, accountants, and so on. There'll be homework assignments and we'll analyse specific past deals from inception to marketing including reviews. Possibly we'll liason with the American Film Institute and bring up a major industry person to conduct a seminar."

The Institute is funded by Famous Players, Odeon, independent theatres and small chains, independent distributors as well as the American majors, and major production houses. None has any voting privileges in Institute affairs, says Ritter. "We're tapping everyone. And it's the percentage of the market each penetrates that determines an individual contribution."

Festivals West

The Second Annual Banff Festival of Mountain Films will be held October 29-30 under the sponsorship of the Banff Section of the Alpine Club of Canada and the School of the Environment at Banff Centre.

The purpose is to provide a competition, create a library, screen the best and find and preserve historical efforts. Films must be about mountain-related topics, for example mountaineering, sports, flora and fauna, or the environment.

Films can be from any part of the world, in any gauge from 8 to 35mm, silent or sound. Awards will be given for Best Film, Best historical film, Best mountaineering film, best Canadian film.

Deadline is September 15. Contact the Alpine Club of Canada, Box 1026 no. 2, 105 Banff

Avenue, Banff Alberta T0L 0C0.

Yorkton

The 14th Yorkton Fest will be held October 11-15 at Yorkton, Saskatchewan, and will include a conference of Western Canadian Filmmakers.

Also new this year is a \$500 special cash award for Best Children's Film. Gift is from a special endowment from Queen City Junior Film Society to encourage the making of children's films. Society ceased operation from lack of such product.

Entries for the fest must be under 60 minutes, in 16 or Super 8, and in by August 1st. Contact Don Humphries, Executive Secretary, Yorkton Fest, Box 477, Yorkton, Saskatchewan S3N 2W4.

Dipping into the till of the Yorkton Fest



TV Production Ontario

An eighteen show co-production, already scheduled for NBC's kid line-up, is currently shooting at Toronto's Kleinburg Studios and in the surrounding region. The network has optioned 52 weeks of shows.

Producing are CTV and NTA of the U.S. along with ITV of Britain. This allows a budget of \$105,000 per show, but shooting is not leisurely. A show is done every three days. Four directors and two crews alternate; directors include Peter Carter, Joe Scanlon, Stan Olsen, and Larry Dobkin. Marilyn Stonehouse is production manager and Tony Lucibello first A.D.

It's about a specially-trained group of animals who rescue people in distress where humans can't get to. Cast is Canadian: Michael Reynolds as the trainer, Helen Shaver as a vet, and Michele Tough and Donann Cavan as his kids. The animals are foreign imports under trainer Fernando Cellis. Overall producer is American Sam Strangis.

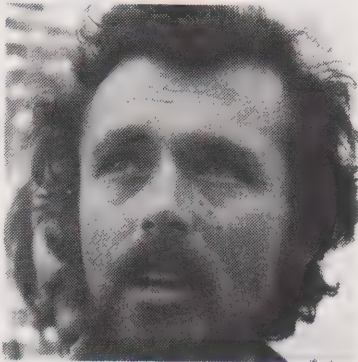
Other TV Production

Fishtails is an OECA series for kids. It's about two crabs who get washed out to sea and continue on to see the world. Twenty-six episodes are being filmed by producer Paula Clarke, and the technique is to use real fish filmed in a special tank in Bristol, England, and then add Canadian voices in post-production... CTV has set up a news syndication service for affiliates for the first time by a network in Canada. Top stories are offered for insertion in local newscasts... Insight Productions is producing an hour show on magic. Involvement will be by Doug Henning and rare footage of Houdini will be included.

And at the CBC

Sidestreet is winding up its season's shooting, with the final episode set for Vancouver filming in August, with all contribution from local personnel. Peter Pearson directed two programs this spring, and in one the Steadicam camera is used throughout the shoot for the

first time in any TV show in Canada, Chuck Mangione has written the theme music for *Sidestreet* and will include it on his next album... Pearson and *For the Record* producer Ralph Thomas, are working on a script based in the Mary Steinhauser tragedy... Francis Mankiewicz is currently direct-



Francis Mankiewicz

ing another in that series called **A Matter of Choice**. It's about rape, and producer is Anne Frank and script is by Cam Hubert...

Stephen Katz is directing **Catsplay** as a ninety-minute special. Writer is Hungarian Istvan Orkeny (it was recently a feature film) and it's about an old woman who, in running a boarding house, runs everybody's lives as well. Cast includes Helen Burns, Doris Petrie, Maya Fenwick, Frances Hyland and Jan Rubes. Script adaptation is by Timothy Findlay... Perry Rosemont is producing a tape series for airing next fall. Thirteen episodes of *Custard Pie* are now in production. It's about four young people trying to make it in show biz; the cast includes Peter Kastner, Kate Lynch, Derek McGrath and Nancy Dolman... Chances are good for *King of Kensington* to be renewed in the U.S. for twenty-six episodes plus options...

Steve Hickok has been brought into the variety department to develop comedy pilots. He's American. Some ideas are **One in a Million** about lottery winners, Northwest Passage about the English and French in 1710, **Green Line** about Palestine peacekeeping, and one set in a senior citizens' commune. All to be aired under the Comedy Playhouse slot next year.

Festivals Compete

Five film festivals will stretch out from early August to early October, giving Canadians in the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal area an extraordinary chance to view international cinema at its best. That is, if the promises and aspirations of the festival organizers are realized.

The two monster festivals, Bill Marshall's Festival of Festivals in Toronto (Sept. 9-19) and Serge Losique's World Film Festival in Montreal (Aug. 19-28) are vying for first place in prestige and efficacy. The winner will be judged by the quality of films screened and, no doubt, the fall-out in terms of marketing and information for the Canadian industry.

For the moment, both are funded by their respective municipalities, provincial government agencies, and the Film Festivals Bureau in Ottawa; and both are counting on services from the airlines and hotels, etc. Whether Canada can long support two international festivals with budgets of between \$300,000 and \$500,000 is the question the supporters of the festivals must soon answer.

Marshall hopes that the public will perceive the 'up-start' Montreal festival as another move in the English-French conflict. He cites the "perversity and megalomania of Mr. Losique" as being the motivating forces behind the creation of the Montreal Festival.

Losique, on the other hand, refuses to have his festival compared to the one in Toronto. The essence of a *real* international festival is, according to Losique, the presence of good films presented for the first time, and the ability to draw important people to the festival. Marshall's programming last year, maintains Losique, was no better than the programs run regularly at the cinémathèques and film theatres across Canada. Gerald Pratley and others have made the same criticism. Losique, flabbergasted at the money which Marshall was given to run his first festival, decided to organize one of his own, to show how it is done.

For starters, Ingrid Bergman will open the World Film Festival in Montreal; Maurice Bessy, longtime organizer of the Cannes Festival (now retired) is the délégué général for Europe. About 30 features will be chosen for the official selection,

and all of them will be shown for the first time in Canada. Among the titles: **Realm of the Senses** by Oshima (the strong, beautiful and obscene film which won over Cannes in 1976) **Padre Padrone** (Golden Palm: Cannes 77), **A Great Day** by Ettore Scola, **Vera Baxter** by Marguerite Dura.

Marshall is, for the moment, jealously guarding the details of the Festival of Festivals, though the program will become public on July 27.

Meanwhile, Losique moves ahead, announcing almost daily additional information about the guests and the films he will present. Both festivals plan to present between 120 and 150 films in all.

Three other festivals are also waiting in the wings. The Canadian Film Institute will present a program of some twenty films from Aug. 4-13 at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Ottawa 77 will have a children's program and a selection of the best of the animation festivals at Annecy and Zagreb as well as an international selection and a few Canadian films like Spry's **One Man** and Lefebvre's **Le vieux pays ou Rimbaud est mort**.

The Quebec Association of Critics, which includes some, but not all of the Québécois critics, also plans 8 days of screenings in Montreal from Aug. 11 to 18. In early June, this Festival International du Film de la Critique Québécoise announced 14 films, including Goretta's **La Dentellière**, Duras' **India Song**, and Behi's **Soleil des Hyènes**. Serge Losique has since said that 6 of the films on the Critics' list will be seen in his festival and not in theirs, creating a conflict every bit as touchy as the one budding with Toronto.

Lastly, Roland Smith, the programming wizard of the Outremont Theatre in Montreal, the oldest and most successful of the Canadian rep theatres, plans his own festival, which he will program in his four theatres around the province. Like the critics, he promises a good number of filmmakers and critics, though names are not forthcoming. Called the Festival International du Film 1977, Smith promises 30 premières from the 29 Sept. to the 10 Oct. Finding premières, after four other festivals have shown their wares, will be quite a feat indeed.



Animated Extravaganza from Nelvana

Toronto's Nelvana Films is nearing completion of a half-hour \$250,000 animated TV special with the working title of **A Cosmic Christmas**.

The picture, which has employed upwards of 50 film artists, was initially presold to the English and French networks of CBC-TV, and the rest of the budget was raised by a Canadian financial syndicate organized by Toronto lawyer Jeffrey Kirsch. Music for the film is by Sylvia Tyson.

The story, written by Ida Nelson, Laura Paull and Ken Sobol, concerns a Canadian town which is visited at Christmas by three spacemen in search of the meaning of the Star of Bethlehem. Among the central characters is an un-anthropomorphized Canadian goose named Lucy.

The project draws heavily on Nelvana's experience in the area of children's films over the last six years. Going on its previous experience, the company decided at the outset that a strong financial base and a solid storyboard would be es-

sential for successful international marketing of the new film.

In this context director Clive Smith and producers Patrick Loubert and Michael Hirsch have kept in mind their experience making **A Christmas Two-Step**, a TV special combining live-action and animation produced two years ago. **Two-Step** sold in the European market, but it "didn't have enough production values to sell in the States," which is the major international market for such films.

As part of the marketing strategy for its current special, Nelvana has prepared a five-minute 35 mm demo short of **A Cosmic Christmas** for showing to distribution agencies in the United States. As well, the film is being represented at Cannes this year for the world TV market.

The film's substantial budget has also enabled Nelvana to cast the main characters, as much as possible, to the seven key animators, with each ani-



mator acting out at least one character. The animation involves, as well, five levels of cinema image, in place of the more limited animation which has been the rule in extended animation projects in Canada for many years.

"What we're attempting," says Clive Smith, "is much nearer to what was done, perhaps, in the '30s and '40s - at the Disney studios and Warner Brothers - 'in terms of full animation."

"And when you're dealing with that many levels," says Smith, "it's a lot of work, especially when you have three or four characters on the screen."

"You have a whole different feel to each character. When you have a scene with three or four characters in it, it's almost like having the same footage redone three or four times. Economically, it's very hard to produce stuff like this now."

Nelvana's emphasis on production values extended also to the storyboard, which Clive Smith and Frank Nissen developed with strong characterization and close attention to detail. The animation, in turn, as seen in the fast-paced demo, is directed with confidence and immediately engages the attention of the viewer.

Jaan Pill

Censors in Winnipeg

Plans are under way for the 10th Canadian Conference of Film Censors and Classifiers which will be held in Winnipeg sometime in the fall. Chairman of the Manitoba Film Classification Board, Barbara Mills, said that the date would either be early September or late October, depending on the representatives' preference.

It has been a year and a half since provincial board chairman and/or representatives have met to discuss matters of mutual concern. But Ms. Mills said that time will be allotted to hear from any concerned groups about the medium.

"If the conference is structured in a manner that sets aside time for the submission of briefs, such groups will also have to work within a time framework," she said, so that the conference does not become tangled in similar matters.

Although the conference is for provincial representatives,

she sees the overall function of the meeting as having more scope and importance. Ms. Mills said that chairmen, whose business it is to administer boards and not view films, may not be totally aware of existing problems.

"We are a reasonable liaison between the public, the industry and government and if interested parties wish to address the conference they should be encouraged," Ms. Mills said.

Ms. Mills, who is the youngest chairman on any provincial board, was a Manitoba representative at the last conference held in Vancouver in 1975. Because of the apparent ineffectiveness of the Vancouver conference, the Manitoba minister then in charge of the provincial board insisted that the next conference be held in Winnipeg.

It was Ms. Mills' experience that none of the conferees saw a necessity for a bi-annual meeting or the need to exchange ideas

and feedback. "There is an urgent need for a conference that would do something; a conference that should be an educational process rather than just a social gathering."

At the moment she is drawing up a list of potential guest speakers from both the United States and Canada but she has not had a solid confirmation of any invitation.

At the Vancouver conference there was a noticeable lack of the media, who were not encouraged to attend the conference or reflect the uselessness of it. "Had the media been present the whole thing would have been played across the country and that would have been terrific. The film industry, as well, was not in attendance and representatives of the industry would dearly love to speak to collected representatives of provincial boards," Ms. Mills reported.

Both the media and the industry will be present at the Win-

nipeg conference in some way, shape or form. The fall conference has been set to run three days but Ms. Mills is contemplating whittling the length down to two days.

The reason: Ms. Mills said she would like to see the conferees leaving the conference wishing they had another day rather than lamenting that three days was too long.

Ms. Mills promises that the Winnipeg conference will be newsworthy, although a formal agenda has yet to be devised. Despite the shortcomings of the Vancouver conference, the Manitoba chairman sees such meetings as an important tool.

"It should be continued for the kinds of reasons the conferees were not prepared to bother themselves with, and they weren't problems of administration. If we're going to have a conference let's not have a conference about processing film but rather a think tank where we can get together and talk about the ramifications of what we are doing."

Lee Rolfe

Who Has the Bread?

The Ontario Arts Council announced its Annual Screenwriting grants (worth up to \$3000 each) and both the Junior (up to \$3000) and Senior (up to \$10,000) Filmmakers grants recently.

Fifteen screenwriters out of 75 submissions received money. These were Charles Dennis, Pen Densham, Joan Finnegan, Mort Forer, Jim Henshaw, Martin Lavut, Leon G. Marr, Michael Ondaatje, Don Owen, Donna Preece, John Saxton, Phil Surguy, Helen Sutherland, Ratch Wallace and Peter Walsh.

Senior Filmmakers include Robert Bergman, Bill Boyle, Michael Brownstone, Allen Goldstein, Rick Hancox, John Lapointe, Gary Nichol, Kim Ondaatje, Paul Quigly, Michael Savoie, Janet Walczewski.

Junior Filmmakers include Rudy Buttignol, Lance Carlson, Lawrence Day, Peter Dudar, Terry Godsen, Barry Greenwald, Peter Harcourt, Frieder Hochheim, Philip Hudsmith, Deanna Kamiel, David Leach, Heather Malcolm, John MacDonald, Josef Sebesta, Cameron Tingley, Peter Tingley, Paul Williams, Paul Wing - all from Toronto - and Allan Anderson of Tottenham.

Canada Council Explorations

Program announced some film grants. La Galerie Media of Montreal received \$5000 for showing Canadian films, Ann Mortiffee got \$6000 to work on a film script and score in Vancouver.

The Council awarded senior Arts Grants recently. Worth up to \$16,000, film and video recipients included Don Shebib and Walter Wright of Toronto, F.J. "Budge" Crawley of Ottawa, and Robin Spry of Montreal. Regular arts grants, worth up to \$8000, were awarded to Jean-Pierre Boyer of Montreal, Ronald Gabé, Terrence McGlade, Georges Saia, and Michael Tims of Toronto, Paul Wong of Vancouver, Paul Tana of Montreal, and Ernest Gusella of Red Deer, Alberta, all in Film and Video.

Wintario grants to film included \$5000 to the Super 8 Film Festival in Toronto, and \$7470 to David Kaufman of Toronto to film **The Poet as Landscape: The Life and Times of A.M. Klein...** The Ontario Arts Council is now offering grants for video production. And Senior film grants are to be raised to a \$20,000 maximum to help make them into programs for TV.

The Ontario budget for the

arts was raised 15.6% in the recent provincial budget. Only some groups will get increases, however, and the raise was not even expected. Culture Minister Robert Welch had advised groups to cut 5%, but supposedly was successful in convincing cabinet to raise the total.

NFB Script Program winners

They sorted through 1300 scripts by 700 women; each was read by three members of the National Film Board, and the best 250 received personal critiques. All for the program where the Board's Studio D under Kathleen Shannon solicited ten-minute scripts from women all across the country.

The finalists numbered 16, and three outside judges - Anne Frank, a CBC producer, writer/director Patricia Watson and actress Kate Reid - picked the winners. \$600 goes to **Celia Behind Me** by Isabel Huggan of Belleville and **How to Call Cows** by Helen Sutherland of Toronto. \$300 went to Barbara Novak of Toronto for **Victoria Park** and to Bonnie Buxton of Ottawa for **The Coat**.

Births

Louis-Charles de Beaūce Vachon-Pearson was born on July 3, 1977 to Peter Pearson and wife Suzanne Vachon. We hear Peter is now seven feet tall.

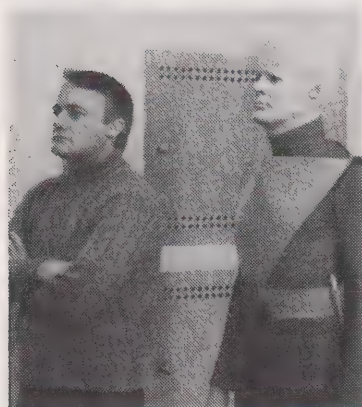
Deaths

Richard Schouten, film and television producer, died suddenly on July 3rd. Death was caused by an attack of asthma. He was in his late Forties. Schouten produced *Witness to Yesterday* for Television, was one of the producers of *Black Christmas*, and was active in support for various arts endeavors in publishing and theatre in Toronto. He had recently resumed producing by forming Elgin Productions with Victor Solnicki, and had joined The Talent Group, a talent agency based in Toronto, to promote clients in the media and develop projects for the long-term.

Reuben Bolstead, 76, retired President of Famous Players. He came to Canada in 1930 to be Comptroller of Famous Players, stayed and rose to Vice-President in 1941. He became President in 1963.

Coming Soon...

Blood City, to be distributed by Ambassador, will open in Toronto on September 16... **Deadly Harvest**, an Ambassador distrib of a Burg Production, is also set for fall... **Alien Encounter** and **Who Has Seen the Wind** are set for sometime later this summer... **Rituals**, produced by Larry Dane and distributed by Astral, will have a gala preem near its filming location:



Alien Encounter

Sault Ste. Marie. Date is July 22 and site is the Algoma Theatre. Most of the stars will attend along with the main production crew... Bill Marshall's **Outrageous** will be distributed by Baxter-Steinman in the U.S. and by New Cinema Enterprises in Canada. The New York opening will be first, in late August, with a Canadian run set to begin in late September...

Henning Jacobsen Productions has completed editing and testing a compilation film called **That's Country**. It consists of film of fifty stars singing seventy-five country and western songs over the past twenty-five or thirty years. Doug MacDonald of Film House discovered a library of film and saw a feature. Rights were relatively clear, so a 'That's Entertainment'-type of film is now ready for test marketing and release... No word yet on such maple leaf efforts as **The Uncanny**, **Angela**, **Full Circle**, etc.

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People's Progress

Canadian actress **Margot Kidder** will play Lois Lane in the double-epic now shooting in England called **Superman... Linda Beath** of New Cinema Enterprises and **Bob Huber**, long-time repertory cinema operator, have joined to run Toronto's Capitol Theatre as the Fine



Margot Kidder soon to be Lois Lane

Arts. They got a two-year contract from Famous Players for the 822-seat house, and plans are for a double bill every night — one re-issue and one recent art film — with separate admission prices for each of \$3.00 and \$3.75 respectively. Famous has been eager to do something with the Capitol for a long time — it sits just off main transit access and has fierce competition from nearby facilities at main transit points — and had worked out a deal with Beath for another non-producing theatre, the T-D Cinema. Latter will be put to non-film use, so a deal was struck for the Capitol.

From July 5-15 an animation workshop for kids was held at Toronto's Harbour front. **Helen Metz** took twenty-four kids aged 9-14 through the "Middle Earth Animation Workshop", providing all facets of the process and resulting in a one-minute film. Assisting were **Greg Roberts** and **Deborah Collis**...

Pen Densham and **Leonard Yakir** returned from the CC-FM/CFDC/OAC-sponsored intern program in July. They were apprenticed to **Norman Jewison** on his currently-shooting feature **F.I.S.T.**, about trucking in the Thirties in the U.S. midwest. ...Actor **Kenneth Welsh** is in an unenviable spot. The postponement of the CBC

show **The Tar Sands** to a slot in next year's **For The Record** series means Welsh can't appear in the series shooting this summer and fall; CBC won't allow an actor to appear in a series twice in the same season, and Welsh did the show for last season airing.

Harry Rasky was the subject of a Retrospective and special weekend at critic Judith Crist's Tarrytown Festival in New York in June. His visit coincided with theatrical opening of **Homage to Chagall** in New York. Critics were ecstatic... Broadcaster **David Suzucki** — radio's *Quirks and Quarks* and *Science Magazine* on TV, both for CBC — received the Cybil Award from the Canadian Broadcasting League this June. Award is for an instrumental "individual or program in upholding and promoting the public interest in broadcasting". Previous recipients were **Pierre Juneau**, **Harry Boyle** and **As it Happens**.

Diana Postlethwaite has departed her post as Assistant in the Ontario Arts Council Film and Photography Division. She'll return to England. Both she and the film community were upset at the lack of knowledge on the part of new Literature and Film Officer **Steve Stevanovic** about film and felt that her contribution in creating the film program with previous Film Officer **Ron Evans** should have been more concretely acknowledged.

Critic **Robin Wood** has been spending the summer at Atkinson College, York University, in Toronto... Actress **Kim Cattrall** has signed a seven-year contract with Universal Pictures in Hollywood... **Susan Peetrie**, now resident in L.A., has appeared in various TV shows, and recently did a pilot that has a chance for next year's second season... Journalist **Bob Johnstone** will join the on-camera group at the CBC's Fifth estate, and Winnipeg interviewer **John Harvard** will conduct current affairs interviews for **Peter Gzowski's** show.

Two recent additions to CBC current affairs are **Carole Taylor** and **Keith Spicer**. Taylor returns to TV as a co-host for a CBUT Vancouver weekly current affairs show. The other host is Spicer. She'll be a con-

tributor to **90 Minutes Live** and a guest host for a week, and plans to host a major documentary special and develop a series, the latter for the season running 1978-79.

Chalmers Adams, producer of **Between Friends and Partners**, is now removed from the front lines into a back-up position. He's practicing corporate and commercial law — "with a keener than usual interest in communications" — from the R.S. Engel office in Toronto.

Leo Lacroix has been appointed the new head of the French division of TV Ontario, beginning July 1. Formerly assistant General Manager of Programming, Lacroix is now General Manager of the new French Division, in charge of French Services. 17% of programming is now in French, and so a new division was formed in May for the 650,000 French speaking Ontarians who receive OECA... A 23 year veteran of broadcasting, **Ron Keast**

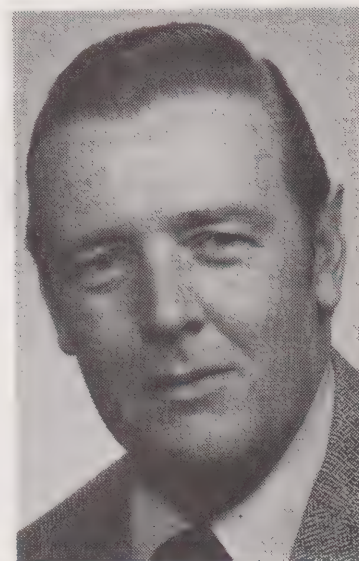


Ron Keast: OECA

has been appointed Chief of English Programming for TV Ontario. Keast was OECA's Director of Open Sector (adult) programming... The OECA South Central Regional Council, an advisory board to inform TV Ontario of local needs, has four new members: **Charity L. Grant** of University of Toronto's Faculty of Social Work, **Roger Babin** who is head of Guidance at Welland's Ecole Secondaire Confédération, **Michael McPherson**, a St. Catharines post office employee and organiser of drop-in centres, and **Wayne Cunningham**, Dean of Applied Arts Division at Georgian College, Barrie.

President of Odeon Theatres of Canada **Harry Blumson** has retired early because of ill health. **Robert Myers** has been upped from Vice-President to Executive Vice-President, and Board Chairman **Chris Salmon**, former Odeon Prez, will serve

as active chairman... **Frank Fisher**, who was Vice-President and General Manager at Odeon, is now Chairman of the Board of Management at O'Keefe Centre, Toronto's huge touring house... Garry Ian Duke of Vancouver has been appointed to a five-year term on the board of the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC) ... **Lise Ouimet** has been confirmed as secretary general of the CRTC; her position has been the same, but in an 'acting' capacity, while **Guy Lefebvre** is executive secretary of the CRTC Inquiry into the CBC. Lefebvre will leave the CRTC after the inquiry reports... CRTC Commissioner **John Hylton**, a communications law specialist, will leave the Commission this summer to return to private law practice... Lawyer **Philippe Roberge** of Montreal has been appointed to the CBC Board for a five-year term... **Ray Chaisson**, now head of Toronto CBC flagship CBLT's local news, will become head of CBC English TV in Montreal... **Paul David Break** of Toronto, a communications consultant, has been named to the CBC's Board for a five-year term.



Gordon McCurdy

Gordon McCurdy, a member of SUMPTE and the CSC, has joined the professional division of Kingsway Film Equipment... **Bill Stewart** has been named a Vice-President of Global TV. He retains his position of Program Director... **Al Bruner**, Global founder has become Director of Marketing at CITY TV, Toronto's independent station... **Rae Corelli** has been named to replace Peter Trueman as anchorman on the **Global News**. Corelli was a reporter with the **Toronto Star**.

BOX OFFICE GROSSES

Title	Origin	Distributor	Period Covered	Places Played	Total Weeks	Gross
Airport 77	US	Universal	25 Mar - 3 June	Canada	10	\$ 2,400.00
Blood in the Streets	UK	Frontier	28 Jan - 3 June	Canada	18	\$ 33,000.00
The Boob Tube	US	Frontier	21 Jan - 3 June	Canada	19	\$ 91,000.00
Cousin Cousine	Fre	New Cinéma	21 Jan - 3 June	BC-Alb-Ont	19	\$173,000.00
L'eau chaude, l'eau froide	Can	Cinéma Libre	4 Mar - 7 Apr	Que	5	\$ 49,750.00
The Edge (La marge)	Fre	Cinepix	13 May - 3 June	BC	3	\$ 22,500.00
Fin de semaine infernal (Death Weekend)	Can	Cinepix	8 Oct - 18 Mar	Que		\$272,330.00
Jabberwocky	UK	Ambassador	6 May - 3 June	BC-Alb-Man-Ont	7	\$252,845.00
J.A. Martin photographe	Can	NFB	11 Feb - 2 June	Montreal	16	\$102,250.00
Nasty Habits	US	International	22 Apr - 3 June	Ont-Que	6	\$158,700.00
Night Child	US	Ambassador	15 Apr - 6 May	Toronto	3	\$ 36,500.00
Je t'aimais mon fils (Death Be Not Proud)	US	Prospec	13 May - 2 June	Que	3	\$ 70,000.00
Rabid	Can	Cinepix	8 Apr - 2 June	Ont-Que	8	\$254,520.00
(Rage)	Can	Cinepix	8 Apr - 2 June	Que	8	\$197,540.00
Ragtime Summer	Can	Danton	29 Apr - 3 June	BC-Alb-Ont		\$ 37,730.00
Le soleil se lève en retard	Can	Mutuels	18 Feb - 28 Apr	Que		\$244,117.00
A Sweeter Song	Can	Ambassador	11 Mar - 3 May	Ont		\$ 10,604.00

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Cannes 1977



The faces and places of Cannes (from top left to right): David Overby (Paris critic) and Paul Leduc (director), Bud Cort (actor) and Larry Hertzog (producer), Jacqueline Brody (Festivals Bureau) and Silvio Narizzano (director), Gratién Gélinas and Michael Spencer from the CFDC, Mr. and Mrs. Robin Spry chat with Sydney Newman after a screening of **One Man**, Marcel Sabourin, Monique Mercure and Jean Beaudin submit to the photographers, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (center) faces the press at a conference after the screening of **Le Vieux pays où Rimbaud est mort**, the general strike which closed down the festival on May 24th, and Sabourin, (accepting the prize for Monique Mercure: Best Feminine Interpretation), shaking hands with Fernando Rey.

To hear some tell it, Cannes was a dog show and Canada, the ill-behaved mutt which was fighting its way upward. For one such jaundiced view, read on...

the year of the bourge

by Ronald H. Blumer



La Dentellière, a Swiss film – one of the best – which you probably won't see in your neighborhood theatre

It is a curious chemistry of political and social ingredients which dictates what sort of films show up as official selections at Cannes. The subject and style of a film is 'in' one year and is as dated as the hula-hoop the next. Last year, 'third world' films were fashionable; next year maybe it will be art films. This year is the year of the bourgeois film – the decor films with pretty sets, neurotic people and fashionable ideas. So this year, the official films matched the fairyland atmosphere of the Riviera with its \$3.00 ham sandwiches and \$4.00 cocktails.

The Riviera, of which Cannes is one tiny particularly vulgar outcropping, lives off three things: flowers, perfumes and tourists. There are no other industries although I read in a local newspaper that there are big plans afoot for the opening of a new research center on the mating habits of the butterfly. Cannes, like any other ocean vacation town has its crowded beaches, then the main drag – "La Croisette", – a row of huge hotels including the \$100 a night Carleton and a train station.

During the winter and spring it takes on the air of a floating old age home with pensioners from all over France strolling out to sit on the deck chairs (one franc) and to watch the bathers and the Mediterranean. There is really nothing all year to disturb this peaceful ebb and flow of people and money except for this crazy wild aberration of a film festival which bursts upon this sleepy vacation land once a year, forty thousand strong.

"It's not a film festival, it's a dog show!" someone commented and indeed what was going on up and down the Croi-

sette rivaled whatever was happening inside the screening rooms. Part of this dog show were the buyers and sellers of films – which is what Cannes is really about. Along with the clowns, the stuffed animals, the would-be, are, and have-been movie stars, the topless, bottomless and middleless men, women and etceteras “dragéing” up and down the promenade were the real live Rizzolis, Reichenbachs and Nat Cohens and their real live cigars, slicing the world into hardtops and drive-ins and trading South American rights for West Germany with an option on next year’s production package sight unseen. Grierson used to call them “the thugs” but he was careful to make friends with them and frequently hung out in their haunts in New York.

It is these buyers who are the ultimate target of the millions and millions of dollars of publicity lavished on these two weeks – in proportions as epic as any film they could possibly be pushing. There are four daily magazines of 20 to 30 pages each covering the events and giving schedules but mainly providing a fat and glossy vehicle for the advertisers. As an official member of the press, one receives a staggering 60 pounds of flyers, brochures, photographs and, for major films, forty-page press books, some in full color. Outside, along the Croisette, lit and rotating billboards proclaim this year’s **Return of the Exorcist**, **Return of the Earthquake**, in short, return of whatever made money last year; James Bond has even returned from the dead. The biggest publicity splash this year was being lavished on a film which hasn’t even been finished. Will the world be ready for **Superman** starring Marlon Brando as Superman’s father and Canada’s own Margot Kidder as Lois Lane? The cost of the publicity spent on this not yet completed film with airplanes flying overhead, billboards everywhere and ten page ads in many of the publications should easily surpass Canada’s film production budget for the year.

And how did Canada stack up against the King Kongs? Extremely well – we may be small but we are awfully pushy. The fact that there were two Canadian films officially competing in the festival and another 15 films at the Marché was not lost on the organizers of Cinema Canada (no relation) whose three-room suite in the Carleton a couple of doors down from Warner Brothers boasted a Cannes first: a video projection system with cassettes of all the Canadian films at Cannes. With this set-up, it was possible for buyers and journalists to see films on demand. With screening schedules looking like something from the Turkish railroad system, this service proved to be very useful. But Canadian pushiness didn’t stop at the official level.

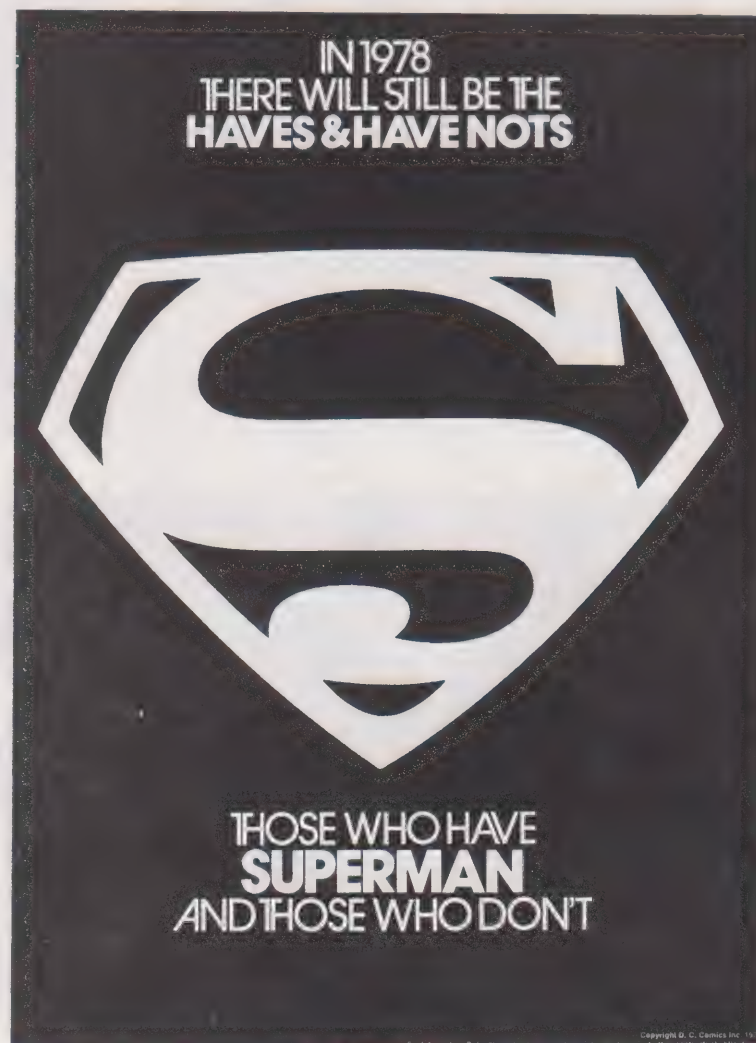
With every other country relatively well behaved – sticking to the officially approved methods of publicity (billboards, airplanes, groups of large stuffed animals carrying signs walking down the Croisette, painted cars, fire-eaters, etc.), nasty little stickers began defacing sidewalks and public monuments. **Rabid** kept sticking to your shoes as you crossed the street and **Cathy’s Curse** glared at you with her electric eyes from every second lamp post. It was a wonderful testament to the Duddy Kravitz spirit of our country that even in the midst of the most elegant cocktail party we couldn’t behave ourselves. Perhaps the David and Goliath award should go the producers of **The Rubber Gun**, a Canadian film at the Marché. Armed with nothing more than a stencil and a can of spray paint, bands of renegades would steal out in the middle of the night, and while the Nat Cohens and Rossis were obliviously sleeping off their wine and quail diners, sidewalks, walls and streets would be-

Ronald H. Blumer, Montreal filmmaker and professor, has just returned from a 6-month stint in Tunisia where he worked with a video group under the auspices of SUCO.

come living billboards for **The Rubber Gun**. For one member of the spray team the big fear was not whether he was going to be caught by the police, but whether he was going to have the humiliating experience of being seen by some starlet on his hands and knees painting the curb. On the second night the worst happened; as he was defacing a fashionable crosswalk he looked up to find himself at the feet of the original Ilsa of porno film fame – boots and all – looking down at him with a mixture of amazement and contempt.

The second worst behaved country was our Commonwealth cousin – Australia, and particularly a man pushing a film with the delightful title **Pure Shit**. Notices for it kept appearing on the bums of all the haughty statues in the parks.

One wonders whether all the waste and decadence and hoopla, so amazingly concentrated during this two week stock market, is the cause or the effect of the emptiness of films in recent years. Among all the fashion and tinsel, tucked away at some obscure screening time, there is the occasional wonderful film from Tunisia, or Poland, from small independents from the United States – oh yes, and from Canada. Without publicity and the requisite number of stars, it has no chance of reaching our local hardtops. Part of the system seems to be that many wonderful films made throughout the world are lost in the crevices of the huge multi-film, multi-national distribution deals. The original idea of the Cannes Film Festival was to promote merit over money but this year, even if a relatively sensitive and unpretentious film did win the Palme d’or, the official events were totally dwarfed by the multi-million dollar horse trades. So, like it or not, Cannes or not, next year we’ll all be seeing **Superman** as the dinosaur film industry stomps its way to extinction. □



It's a bird, it's a plane...



Anouk Ferjac, Marcel Sabourin, Myriam Boyer, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre and Marguerite Duparc-Lefebvre going to the Grand Palais



Sabourin, Monique Mercure and Jean Beaudin, radiant after the screening of J.A. Martin *photographe*



Federal-province small talk: Jean Lefebvre from Festivals Bureau with Michel Brulé and Michel Chabot from the DGCA-Quebec.



Starlets all..?

photos by Federico

the nitty gritty

If you can't sell it, it's no good. According to some.

by Connie Tadros

There may be a lot of noise and nonsense at Cannes, but there is also a lot of hard work being done by those who love the movies and/or make a living from them. The concentration of distributors and world sales agents (the buyers and the sellers) make Cannes unique. As the American Irving Shapiro commented, after stating that he does in 2 weeks at Cannes what it would take him 6 months to do without it, "The echoes of Cannes go all year round." Well, let's hope so. This year Shapiro handled three Canadian films.

Like last year, Cinepix came up the biggest winner, grossing over \$500,000 in advances for David Cronenberg's **Rabid** before the festival had ended. André Link, well seconded by Werner Wolfe from Cinepix's Paris office and Rita Rita Leone, was in constant motion, suggesting that one call him around 8 a.m. if there was anything important. For Link, Cannes means keeping about half the scheduled appointments, appearing at his screenings and knowing who has showed up. The sheer energy pays off.

How else could he have also got a reported \$200,000 in advances for a frightful little Franco-Canadian co-production called **Cathy's Curse**? Or pre-sell the third of the Ilsa films, **The Tigress**, now being edited? According to Link, "If you have a good film, your grandmother can sell it. You may not get the right prices, you may not get the right deal, you might deal with a crook, but you will sell it. Lack of sales at Cannes does not mean that the person was inexperienced, but that the product is unmarketable." Sounds easy, doesn't it?

Irving Shapiro has a solid reputation as one of the best agents in New York, and producer Larry Hertzog chose him to sell **Why Shoot the Teacher** because Shapiro was the man to break into the American market. As well, he handled **Full Circle** for Julien Melzack and **The Rubber Gun** for Allan Moyle. A mixed bag indeed!

Just before the festival ended, the sales were reported to be as follows: \$300,000 for **Why Shoot** with another \$150,000 in negotiation; \$150,000 for **Full Circle** with about \$75,000 pending; and a surprising \$50,000 already in for **The Rubber Gun**.

Checking back with Shapiro in early July, it seems that the figures have all shot up, but just what they are now remains a well guarded secret. As for that deal with the States for **Teacher**, Shapiro says, "It's a matter of our accepting it. We think we've done remarkably well and I don't think there's any reason to rush the film."

"It's a matter of our accepting it. We think there's more in the film than we're being offered... I think we've done remarkably well and I don't think there's any reason to rush the film."

Meanwhile, Hertzog – who was counting on the American release to provide the coattails for the Canadian opening – finally decided to go it alone and opened the film in Ottawa in late June. He also 'premiered' it in Edmonton on July 1, a nice trick if you can pull it off – his birthday present to the nation.

Full Circle, an Anglo-Canadian co-production and the first of the Classic Film ventures starring Mia Farrow was a disappointment at Cannes: a weak and drifting story which tried hard to be suspenseful. The sales reflected this. But Cannes gives producers a second chance, and now a new sequence is being shot; a response, no doubt, to the public's first exposure. Shapiro insists that "important deals are being closed around the world... **Full Circle** is running out very fast, and will be an important film." Sales are confirmed in the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and Latin America. It opens at Christmastime in Australia.

The Rubber Gun, Moyle's first film and the spiritual sequel to **Montreal Main**, has been sold in the US to a new distribution company. Shapiro commented that he expects the film to have a long, slow career.

And after all the ballyho, what of Bill Marshall's crew and **Outrageous**? Well, they were, all of them. There was style if not substance, and even *Maclean's* Bill Miller was taken in by it. The film attracted a lot of attention, and got invitations to many a festival. By the end, no sales were made, though "interest was shown", as they say.

By the beginning of July, the US sale had been made; Steinman Baxter of New York will handle it, opening in August. According to Marshall, "We got a nice advance and a favorable distribution percentage." The reader may supply the figures. Like **Full Circle**, the Cannes screening has led to some changes in **Outrageous**. The commercial version will be 6 minutes less outrageous than the film screened at the festival.)

Talking about outrageous changes, just a note in passing to say that Gille Carle's film **L'ange et la femme**, which met with a hostile reception in Montreal and closed quickly, was cut by the director *before* going to Cannes. The most pornographic sequence was eliminated because Carle felt that the audience lost sympathy with the heroine (Carole Laure) at that point. It made little difference. Robert Lantos, the disappointed producer, reported a small sale to France and a nibble from Sweden, but nothing to write home about.

Harold Greenberg was there, selling a picture of his own for the first time. **Rituals** was well received, and was sold in 11 countries by Mark Damon from California, and Astral's Maurice Attias. Greenberg, who left Cannes after the first week, felt that Astral had learned a lot from this first selling expedition and will return, better prepared – "a potent force" – next year. Meanwhile, the distribution company bought about 15 films there.

This was the year of the National Film Board, but whether the NFB was able to shrug off its bureaucratic lethargy to get out there and scramble remains to be seen. At Cannes, it worked like this:

The Board hired a French public relations firm to deal with the receptions and press conferences, and its image had never been stronger. To boot, it had a film in competition **J.A. Martin photographe** by Jean Beaudin, and 2 films in side events **One Man** by Robin Spry, and **Ethnocide** by Paul Leduc. So far, so good. All three directors were present, as were the stars of **J.A. Martin**. On top of it all, Monique Mercure walked away with the prize for the best actress, an event which made the Montreal box-office for **J.A.** jump from \$5,000 to \$15,300 within a week, and this, after 16 weeks of viewing.

As if the warm critical response to **J.A.** didn't suffice, **One Man** was also getting an enthusiastic welcome. Distributors were knocking at the NFB's doors, trying to get this 'made-for-television' film for their theatres. Add the Olympic film, and you have winners all around.

Or do you? The official representative of the NFB at Cannes is the Paris rep, Yves Blanchard: it's in his territory. David Nobek and André Lamy were also on hand to handle the p.r. duties, and the general manager of the London office was about.

Blanchard takes down names of interested distributors, feeds them back to the local NFB reps in the offices in New York, London, South America, Australia, etc. They, in turn, get back in touch with the distributor, and work out the deals.

Is it fair to say that the NFB will do in 6 months what it takes the other sales agents 2 weeks at Cannes to do?

In mid-June, the NFB still didn't have a Canadian distributor for **One Man**, though the pressure was so great that screenings were to be organized. As for **J.A. Martin photographe**, André Lamy stated recently that there are no immediate plans to make an English version or to distribute the film in English Canada. Mind you, the English subtitles already exist; we saw them in Cannes! *Plus ça change...*

Cannes did mark a serious set-back for the commercial Quebecois film. Neither Claude Fournier's **Je suis loin de toi mignonne** nor André Brassard's **Le soleil se lève en retard** made any sales despite their strong box-office in Quebec.

Pierre David from Mutuel lamented that the future of filming in Quebec rested upon making films in English. The as yet unfinished **Panique** by Jean-Claude Lord was pre-sold to 3 countries for \$75,000 and many other deals are pending the final version of the film. Had **Panique** been available in English, David thinks he could have tripled his sales.

A few other films which weren't ready nevertheless had encouraging sales on the basis of the promotional material at Cannes. Ed Hunt's **Alien Encounter** was reported to have been sold throughout the Far East with the exception of Hong Kong. No spokesman was on hand to provide a complete round-up. Producer Garth Drabinsky's co-production **The Disappearance**, handled by Arnold Lopelson, was also doing well; Drabinsky predicts that the film will recoup its costs before release. For the time being, it has sold in over 20 countries though the buyers in the big markets – the UK, the US, France and Germany – are waiting to see the finished film before committing themselves.

For seven years, the Secretary of State Department has fielded support staff to second the efforts of the Canadians who go to Cannes to buy and sell. Jean Lefebvre, director of the Film Festivals Bureau, has headed up this effort for the

last four years and feels that it is well worth the time and energies of his department. Whether or not he will be able to continue lending this support without a renewed commitment from the SOS is in question.

Organizing for Cannes (preparing pamphlets, holding jury screenings, sub-titling, the costs of the operation) eats up half of the yearly budget (\$400,000) of the Festivals Bureau: Of the \$200,000 spent, Lefebvre estimates that about \$100,000 goes for activities whose benefits are felt throughout the year, and \$100,000 is uniquely spent for Cannes. Over the years, he has had no budget increase, and each year, he has cut down the size of the staff sent to Cannes. (Just a note; to the great confusion of all concerned, the Festivals Bureau is called 'Cinema Canada' when it works abroad. Only our magazine has the right to use the name on Canadian soil)

This year, with its diminished staff, the Bureau seemed to function more efficiently than in previous years. The Canadian Film Development Corp. set up a marketing section within the Cinema Canada offices, and the Province of Quebec set up shop as well. Even Peter Skinner from the Province of Ontario was officially on hand, though without office space within the delegation.

It seemed to offend no one that the Direction générale du cinéma (Québec) had the provincial flag flying freely on its desk top as its three representatives studied the 'Cannes situation' in earnest. In Cannes, harmony reigns in a common effort to breakout internationally. Nevertheless, the odds have it that Quebec will send a separate representation next year, and focus on a booth either in the Hotel Carlton lobby or in the Palais des Festivals.

The government support is a great help to the weaker, uninitiated producers and distributors who must master the 'folly of Cannes' quickly if they are to function well. The old hands can get along on their own, though it's always nice to have Cinema Canada around.

This year, a distinction was made between the films on the Marché and those of 'cultural' importance. The latter were the five films chosen to participate in the competition, and in the complementary events. The Cinema Canada staff – and principally Jacqueline Brody – was decisive in getting press coverage and recognition for these films. Should it not be present in future years, the cultural impact of Canadian films would be significantly diminished at Cannes. Culturally, the 'echos of Cannes' include a great many invitations to other festivals, and the creation of a general awareness of Canadian films.

Bill Marshall called Cannes a tribal village: "You show your film at 2 o'clock and by 5 pm you've got feedback from a dozen people. You know what they think." Irving Shapiro said the same thing when he talked about the concentrated audience reaction. It can make a film which might otherwise fall flat in a lonely screening room.

At Cannes, you get down to the nitty gritty. A film is shown, in front of an audience, to the critics and distributors who ultimately will determine who will see the film. As Shapiro says, "I think that it's important to finally display your wares to the ultimate audience, and while it's not the best cross section, it's the only cross section in the world which is available to critics, and buyers, and I think it works."

This year, it worked well for Canada. The films themselves were better than in previous years, and they sold better too. And until someone has a better idea, sales at Cannes will continue to be a dominant element in the future of Canada's film industry. □

of cannes, canada, robin spry and roberto rossellini

Marc Gervais, a Cannes habitué, looks at the Canadian participation and singles out Robin Spry's *One Man*. He also pays tribute to Roberto Rossellini, the man and the filmmaker.

by Marc Gervais



The idea of Craig Russell as Mae West or Judy Garland was *Outrageous*, even at Cannes!

Cannes '77 was a Canadian success story by now well recorded. Many of the elements of that story deserve careful analysis, not the least of which, of course, were our best international sales on record.

Marc Gervais, Montreal film critic, is an associate professor in the department of communication arts at Concordia University. He is the author of *Pier Paolo Pasolini* edited by Seghers in Paris.

There were some films one would like to be able to write about, but cannot, since it is simply impossible to see everything on display during a two-week period that has become charged almost beyond the breaking point. And so I missed *Outrageous*, a spoofy film that elicited a lot of good popular and critical response. But see it or not, one heard about it, thanks to a publicity and marketing pizzazz seldom seen surrounding anything from Canada. At last count, *Outrageous* was being courted by seven other international film festivals, ranging from Berlin to the Virgin Islands.

Peter Carter's **Rituals** presents a striking example of a strong film marred by overwriting and too much giving in to market values. Carter almost achieves the Canadian dream of reconciling what are often contradictory demands: the small film, basic audience impact as determined by well proven Hollywood practice, and personal in-felt experience. Almost, but not quite. But, flawed or not, **Rituals** proves that Carter's marvelous earlier feature, **The Rowdyman**, was no fluke, and that Carter himself is one of our best feature directors.

Another story: the flawed **Olympics** film, a movie that could not miss, but did; but which still will do well, inevitably, in international sales.



Riding the rapids in **Rituals**

One could equally linger on Sylvio Narizzano's **Why Shoot the Teacher** a delightful rural prairies' Depression story, starring Bud Cort, and a Canadian film that should do well all over North America.

Above all, Canada scored with its two official entries in the Big Festival competition. Both are Québécois films, and both are charming, personal works. Jean Beaudin's **J.A. Martin photographe**, which deservedly won the best actress award for Monique Mercure, may well usher a blessedly new spirit, a psychologically freer and maturer one, into Québécois cinema. And Pierre Mignot's camera brings us a Quebec never before seen on the screen. Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, with **Le vieux pays où Rimbaud est mort**, gives us his most accessible, serene, and well-rounded film to date. The brilliant but uneven enfant terrible of Quebec cinema seems to be shedding his worst ideosyncratic traits, while retaining his freshness and unique creative independence.

All of this is well and good, and worthy of far more complete treatment. However, for reasons which may emerge below — and at the risk of sounding both pretentious and pedantic — this article has opted for focussing on one film, Robin Spry's **One Man**, and through that one film, to touch upon certain larger issues involving Canadian cinema, some aspects of Cannes '77, and, indeed, of the film world at large.

For this writer, anyway, **One Man** proved one of the most intriguing films of the whole lot.

For one thing, the film seems assured of a wide international market, above all on the television networks of the Western world. But more important, surely, is the quality of a film which won such enthusiastic response from the over worked, not to say jaded, Cannes audiences.



Rose-Aimée (Monique Mercure) and J.A. (Marcel Sabourin)

For out of the 500-odd films shown in the various Cannes manifestations, **One Man** was surely one of the most exciting, most dynamic. Paradoxically enough, the film is outstanding precisely in those areas which the National Film Board, its producer, and Robin Spry himself are not primarily noted for: gut-level popular appeal. No doubt about it, the viewer is riveted, captured by the pace, involved with the various characters *moved* by what is going on.

For some years now, Spry has been commuting back and forth between fiction and documentary. His television dramas have given him the groundwork in fiction and in the use of professional actors. The highly successful **Prologue**, a feature already a decade old, was a sort of mix, leaning heavily towards documentary. And the more recent **Action/Reaction**, of course, was out-and-out documentary in its study of the October crisis.

With **One Man**, Spry moves all the way into fiction feature cinema, showing a mastery and control hitherto lacking in his work. The acting has *size*, popular appeal. Len Cariou,

Sabourin again, this time as Abel in **Le vieux pays...**





Cariou and Eastwood make **One Man** live

in his first film, already has the aura of film stardom. And Jayne Eastwood and Carol Lazar, in a well-rounded cast, are excellent. Jean Lapointe, as always, is superb.

And, as already stated, the film moves in the best tradition of the well-made thriller. As a matter of fact, this quality may well be **One Man's** major limitation. Or at least it raises a very keen esthetic, not to say moral, problem. For in **One Man**, we are in territory grown too familiar: the film has the feel of those slick, incessantly repeated crime detection dramas that inundate American television. In its structure and texture, in its film rhetoric, and in its characters and situations, it risks being too easy, too familiar for an audience glutted on consumer TV objects, one that cannot be reached at any level except that of unthinking, unchallenging consumption.

In other words, does the film language employed doom **One Man** to a sad diminution in precisely those dimensions that have informed Spry's previous work, and, indeed, that have been one of the hallmarks of the NFB's finest products over the years?

One refers here to such things as social responsibility, film as social research, film as consciousness-raiser and conscience-rouser.

The most fascinating aspect, it seems to me, of **One Man** is that it attempts to communicate this spirit of true social concern through a popular film language. And in this it was, at Cannes, only one of a number of works attempting the same risky tour de force.

Sweden, in very oblique fashion, presented two such films. Bo Wideberg's **The Man on the Roof**, already a hit in New York, is an excellent police thriller that achieves special interest through its playing with the conventions and situations with a certain ruthless awareness. Implicitly at least, some pretty powerful social comments are coming across.

Mats Ahren's **The Assignment**, using popular film rhetoric, explores with undeniable power the dilemma facing Western nations in their dealings with Latin American dictatorships. It stars Canada's most accomplished actor, Christopher Plummer, who goes on receiving full marks for his stage work, but very little consideration for his consistently interesting performances in films good, bad, or indifferent.

Denmark as well had its entry in this popular genre. Anders Refn's excellent **Copper** studies the social structures underlying social injustice through the trauma of a more or less psychopathic policeman.

It is Robin Spry's film, however, that is the most intense, convincing, and penetrating of all these studies. The story of a TV reporter/star performer, his discovery of the com-

plex socio-economic forces responsible for polluting a Montreal slum area, and his answering moral dilemma, might well serve as a model on how to reduce complex issues into a meaningful communication not beyond the reach of the general public.

High marks, therefore, go to the scripting – usually the weakest area in Canadian filmmaking – and hence to Spry, Peter Pearson, Peter Madden, and probably a lot of others involved in the great number of rewrites. But it is Spry the director who ultimately is responsible for the success of the film. The danger, previously outlined, in courting film language that has become banal, anodine, made-to-order for consumer products – and that, far from eliciting an audience's creative response, simply helps that audience to plunge deeper into its own alienation from anything humanly positive – is more than overcome by Spry's intelligence and deeply felt social commitment. In other words, the film is eminently *aware*, in the finest social sense. And it takes a stand.

But more. Informing this dimension are an intensity, an insight into human relationships, a sensitivity to basic human needs and responses, that make the film soar beyond the dangers inherent in banal, formula-dominated film recipes.

So **One Man** works, the best Canadian film of this type yet made. In one sense, it marks the culmination point of the journalistic, reportorial films I wrote about a few months ago in **Cinema Canada**.



Getting after the news in **One Man**

In a completely different vein, the film raises other, pleasant questions. Where does Robin Spry go from here, as a film maker? He has shown now that he can play the popular game with skill, without sacrificing his personal convictions. Will his next film adventure out onto more ambitious esthetic ground, *i.e.*, in those regions where the whole film, its texture, structure, ideas, etc., becomes a personal, in some ways unique, organic object, both art and communication; or does he consolidate his gains at the present level? Both possibilities, obviously enough, have their share of challenges, risks, pitfalls.

And what about the NFB, its determination to stay away from fiction features demanding too heavy a cut of the over all budget as it presently stands? Will financial success (possibly for all three features: **One Man**, **J.A. Martin**, **photographe**, and the **Olympic** film) alter policy? And so on...

Would that Canadian feature film making were plagued by more problems of this kind!

One Man and a number of other sincere, though by no means so successful, feature films shown at Cannes bring to mind the sad news of Roberto Rossellini's death.



Rossellini as he was during the symposium he organized at Cannes

photo by Federico

For Roberto Rossellini was very much in evidence at Cannes this past May. Indeed, his was far and away the outstanding *personal* presence.

While thousands were scurrying about buying and selling mostly junk movies; while, say, the multimillion-dollar ad campaign for the forthcoming supercolossal **Superman** epic was already in full swing, dwarfing, by sheer size, almost everything else – in other words, while the dominant activity, willnily, was the huckstering of alienation – Rossellini was gathering film directors and anyone else interested in a daily symposium on film responsibility. In essence, he was asking the question: what can we do to make the media socially responsible – the same media which overwhelmingly shirk that responsibility.

The silly newspaper obits following his death seemed only interested in his Ingrid Bergman *scandale* of years ago, passing over, in most instances, the essential thrust of his life, a magnificent one. For Rossellini's entire activity became an incarnation of the quest for truth through the media. The "father of Neo-Realism", he made, over the years, some of the masterpieces of film history, as well as some much less distinguished work. But it was the man himself, with his astounding enthusiasm and openness and generosity, and above all his ability to spur others on to creative action, who played a role far beyond that of his films.

He was always ahead of his time. For example, he helped Truffaut and Godard, and many others of France's Nouvelle Vague (by whom he was revered) to get their start. And many of the young independent national cinemas of different countries turned to him over the ensuing years.

A voracious student, a scientist, inventor, researcher, a lover of and creator in the world of art, he was forever on the go, with his headquarters in Rome and in Paris, but going his peripatetic way through India, Spain, America. Working in universities, with special groups, making films, planning new projects, new explorations in the area of human con-

sciousness and a new understanding – such was the man.

Advanced film research is taking a serious, second look at what he was trying to achieve in his less popular later work. Films on Louis XIV, the Acts of the Apostles, De Gasperi, Pascal, Christ, the History of Science, the History of the Industrial Revolution – on and on the list goes, with his next film slated to be on Karl Marx. It is now clear. From the very start, and right to the end, Rossellini's thrust was constant: to know, to help contemporary man understand his roots. It made for an exemplary quest of the human spirit.

Rossellini died one week after the Cannes Film Festival, of whose official jury he was chairman. Endless film viewings, interviews and discussions, the symposium he was presiding over – the strain was too much.

I chatted with the man briefly in his hotel suite. It was somewhat shocking to see how tired he was, and how the weight of his 71 years had caught up with this apparently indefatigable, energetic man. He was in pyjamas and dressing gown, trying to catch 40 winks. We made a date to meet later in Paris, to plan a seminar in Montreal for later on in the year. And that, of course, was typical of him. Even when the energy was low, the enthusiasm and openness remained, with a desire to do more, help more.

With his death, the cinema loses one of its greatest names, and more – one of its richest human beings.

But in true Rossellini fashion, defeat or frustration are hardly the final word. For hope and creativity go on. Rossellini's legacy, precisely, is carried on by committed film directors like Robin Spry and in their finest moments, by institutions, such as the National Film Board. As long as film people of talent and social responsibility continue to use the media as the area of their activity, so long will the spirit of Roberto Rossellini continue to exercise its influence on a world that sorely needs him. □



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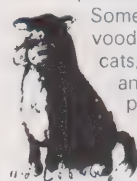
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Charles Champlin
L.A. Times CALENDAR
November 28, 1976

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Arthur Knight
The Hollywood Reporter
November 5, 1976

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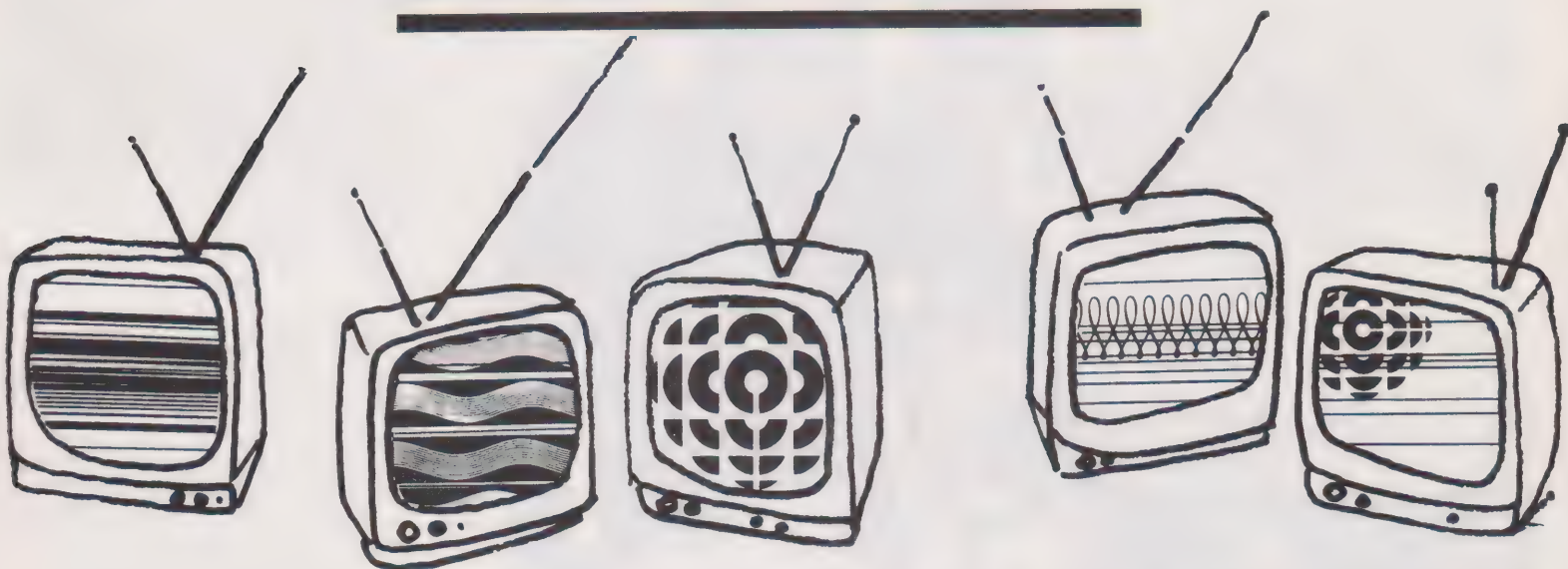
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glacial movements

by Jack Gray

Continuing the cultural discussion, Jack Gray suggests that we use the CBC as a barometer to measure the government's commitment to the arts. As film and television become increasingly interdependent, the future orientation of the CBC – and of broadcasting in general – is of vital concern to those who hope for a healthy Canadian film industry.



Some years ago I expressed optimism that the Federal government was moving toward the enunciation of a film policy, even though that movement seemed to most of us to be glacial.

I am a little alarmed tonight – looking at the agenda – to see that this slight skill at geological forecasting has precipitated me into what might be construed as meteorological speculation on the cultural climate.

So be it.

Some things are clear: the high over Los Angeles continues; there is a stationary cold front over Quebec City; a low pressure system seems permanently centred on Ottawa; we are experiencing heavy fog in Toronto; and the general

forecast is for high winds and stormy weather throughout Canada.

In spite of which it isn't all that discouraging for film makers.

The objective remains as it was: the development of a Canadian production industry. In this regard it is essential to reiterate that when speaking of such an industry we emphasize the interdependence of the various systems the Canadian production industry must serve, not just film, but also broadcasting, the performing arts, the recording industry, publishing – what we generally refer to these days as the cultural industries.

We are, however, in trouble.

There is, as yet, no film policy, and especially, no levy or its equivalent.

The Canadian Film Development Corporation has – had its request for funding cut back.

Jack Gray, writer and scriptwriter, was a founding member of the Toronto Writers Branch of ACTRA and is the newly elected chairman of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers.

Co-productions are causing many problems.

Yet it is on another of the cultural industries – on broadcasting – that I want to dwell tonight.

Many of us are increasingly concerned about what is happening in Canadian broadcasting, and especially about what is happening to the CBC/Radio-Canada.

The CBC is important to us for many reasons, and film people will do well to play close attention to events there.

In practical terms, the CBC is essential to the maintenance of the Canadian talent base; without that base no film industry is possible in this country.

But more important than that, what now happens to the CBC may provide an indicator of what is going to happen to the other cultural industries.

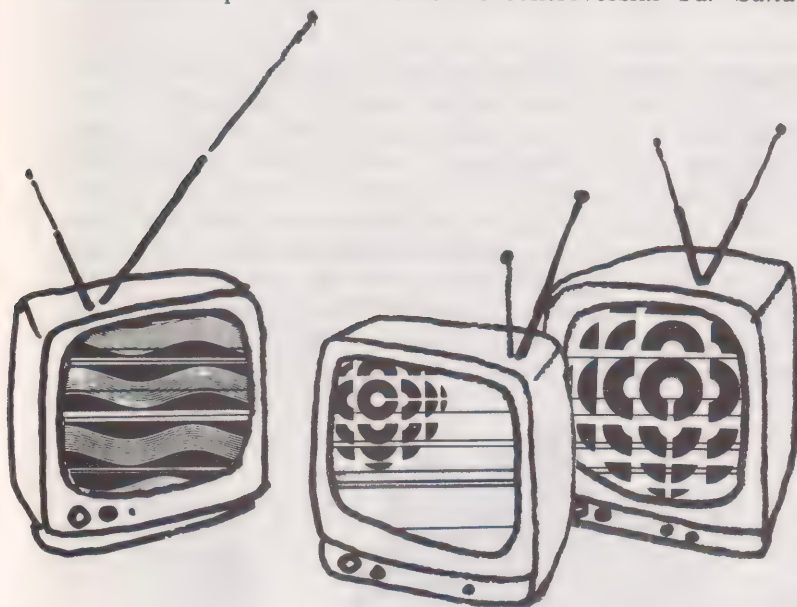
If the government takes positive action on the CBC (and on broadcasting in general), action that is in the public interest, that may indicate that it has finally begun to truly understand the critical nature of the role the cultural industries play, and will play, in the survival of this country.

If the government does not take such action, or if it acts against the public interest, then we have a major fight on our hands, not just for our jobs, not just for the cultural industries as such, but for the country itself.

Make no mistake: the CBC is in great trouble.

The CBC is in trouble with the talent of Canada, as we have seen in its fight with ACTRA over the importation of foreign talent – which isn't about foreign talent at all, of course, but about the nature of the CBC and the programming it produces.

The CBC is in trouble with its programming. The political censorship of Peter Pearson's controversial *Tar Sands*



is one sign of CBC senior management's apparent failure of will.

The CBC is in trouble with the regions: witness the formation in both British Columbia and Ontario of Committees for the Reform of the CBC.

The CBC is in trouble with some of its staff, as evidenced by the extraordinary in-house dust-up between Radio Arts producers and management.

The CBC is in trouble with the public. Those who care don't like what's happening – in the case of the new radio programs, for example. But much more serious, those who don't care are growing in number.

The CBC is in trouble with the politicians. On the one hand, they are seeking ways to control the media – in this case by measures included in Bill C43 which would allow ministers to issue directives to the formerly independent CRTC, and many fear, through the CRTC to the CBC. On

the other, we have the spectacle of cabinet ministers crying public havoc over alleged biased political reporting on Radio Canada.

What are the present results of all this trouble?

The CBC is deeply demoralized.

The CBC is less and less Canadian.

The CBC is the subject of an Official Enquiry by the CRTC, an enquiry requested by the Prime Minister, and which is due to report on July 1.

There is probably going to be a Royal Commission on Broadcasting.

There seems to be an increasingly articulate group – some of whom are blatantly self-interested – who want to carve up the CBC. Many of their proposals do not seem to me to be in the public interest.

What is done with or to the CBC will be of critical importance to us all, as citizens, as broadcasters, and as film makers.

The basic policy decisions that are being made, or which will be made in regard to the CBC, to broadcasting, or even (hopefully) to communications in Canada generally, will shape the future of our interdependent cultural industries – all of them – for possibly several generations. And these decisions are, in my opinion, of critical importance to the future of Canada itself.

Even in the narrowest terms, what is done about broadcasting will have great effects on the film industry, in terms of possible increased production in the private sector, of methods of distribution, and of the share of the production money that will return to film producers.

Is any long range forecast possible at this time?

To me the future looks bright, which may, in the present climate, seem paradoxical.

It is a bright future, however, only to the extent that we are prepared to organize, to work, and to fight for it.

It won't just happen.

There are important technological changes to be understood, absorbed, and put to work in the public interest – such things as videodics, pay television, satellite delivery of programming, the mystical optical fibres that threaten to revolutionize cable – again.

There are fundamental social questions that must be faced. How influential are the media? What are our responsibilities as creators of programming? Can Canada survive under the steady onslaught from the most effective propaganda ever produced – that endless flood of American entertainment programming that comes to us on television and film?

There are profound political problems. Is 'Canada' an idea that is capable of regeneration? Are we prepared to survive as Canadians, or are we determined to balkanize the northern half of the continent? And in tackling such problems, are we prepared to face up to the present facts of Canadian life, and finally admit that a branch plant economy can only support a branch plant culture?

In all of this, the role of the film maker and of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers is clear.

We must clearly understand our objectives.

We must focus our energies and talents on the basic questions. The proper way to do this, in my opinion, is to identify what will best serve the public interest, and to then work to ensure that this public interest is properly and effectively served.

If we are able to do thus, and to the degree that we do it well, the practical concerns will fall into place, and we will be able to develop the tactics, the strategies, the institutions, the funding, the talent, that will give us that strong Canadian production industry – and all its products – whose first commitment is to our first audience, and to our collective future as Canadians. □

a view from nowhere

Production is one half of the cultural equation; exhibition is the other. And for a film to work in a theater, the public has to want it. Whether Canadians are given the chance to become familiar with Canadian films is the question raised by Douglas Bowie. One can not want what one does not know.

by Douglas Bowie

When he was Secretary of State, Hugh Faulkner complained that, in spite of all the Canadian feature films apparently being made, he could never see any of them in Peterborough. Has this situation improved? The answer, it seems, is yes

*Douglas Bowie is a screenwriter (U-Turn) who has lately been writing TV drama. His plays **The Man Who Wanted To Be Happy** and **A Gun, A Grand, A Girl** were seen on the CBC's Performance series this past season, and **Breakdown** is currently in production at the National Film Board.*

— and no. You *can* see the films, but you have to move quickly. And it remains highly doubtful whether Canadian films, with a few rare exceptions, are really making any impression on the country's consciousness beyond the boundaries of Toronto.

I am currently living in Kingston, on the shores of Lake Ontario halfway between Toronto and Montreal, and there has been an interesting phenomenon in the cinemas here recently which casts some rather bleak light on the question of the public's response to Canadian films. In the past three weeks alone no fewer than six new (or relatively new) Cana-



Some of the Canadian characters who hurried through Kingston: from **Eliza's Horoscope**, **Goldenrod**, **Partners**...

dian features have played commercially in Kingston. The films: **Eliza's Horoscope**, **A Sweeter Song**, **Rabid**, **Partners**, **East End Hustle**, and **Ragtime Summer**. That's not even counting the semi-Canadian **The Little Girl Who Lives Down the Lane** which was in town a few weeks earlier. (It's no coincidence, incidentally, that these are all English films. No French-Canadian feature has played here in the past year.)

And how did the filmgoing public respond to this splurge of Canadian culture? Well, I'd bet you could walk up and down Princess Street here all morning offering \$1000 to anybody who had seen even one of these films and your money would scarcely be safer in the bank. The dismal record of their staying power reads as follows: **Eliza** – four days in a tiny theatre **A Sweeter Song** – four days in a tinier one; **Rabid** – one week on a drive in double bill; **Partners** – four days; and **Ragtime Summer** – the hit of the bunch with one full week in Odeon's smallest theatre. Did the Montreal Expos at their most inept ever have a drearier box score? (Precisely how Odeon and Famous Players are fulfilling their voluntary quotas with these negligible runs in their smallest theatres is a whole other question. A question, I suspect, of high mathematics.)

Whatever one may think of some of these films, taken together they represent a substantial chunk of a year's English-Canadian filmmaking, a sizeable expenditure of imagination and effort, not to mention a million or so of the taxpayer's money. And they've slipped stealthily through town in the dark of night and vanished without a trace – unheralded before they arrived, unseen while they were here, unlamented now that they're gone.

It may be argued that Kingston hardly represents a key market, and the failure of these films to make an impact here is not of particular significance. Well, again, yes – and no. English-Canadian films certainly can't make back their costs in Toronto alone, or even in the handful of major cities. Surely the countless smaller and middle-range markets – the Kingstons, the Windsors, the Londons, the Peterboroughs, the Kitcheners – are equally important in making, or almost invariably breaking, Canadian films.

Kingston has an area population of about 100,000 and with seven cinemas (four Famous, three Odeon) and two drive-ins, a relatively high number of theatre screens per capita. There are two universities, one with a thriving film department. There is a dynamic amateur theatrical movement

with several active groups and often three or four well-attended productions running simultaneously. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, The Dutch National Ballet, The Hartford Ballet Company, The Toronto Dance Theatre, The Canadian Opera Company have all played here recently with sellouts for almost every performance in a large theatre.

In short, the culture quotient here is quite high, and if there is such a thing as a prime small city market for Canadian films, Kingston would seem to fit the bill. Yet one after another these films open only to drop over dead along about the second reel without even being pushed. (And it's not just the bunch which has played here in the past few weeks, although they dramatize the situation. **Shoot**, **Goldenrod**, **The Far Shore**, **Second Wind** all had equally short runs.)

So what's the explanation? It can't simply be that the films are no good – although assuredly some of them aren't – because they weren't reviewed and they weren't here long enough for word of mouth to have any effect one way or another. The public hasn't heard these films are lousy. I don't believe it has heard anything about them at all. Although the local paper has a semi-regular film reviewer, not one of these films was reviewed, and only **Eliza's Horoscope** received any unpaid newspaper publicity at all – a telephone interview with Gordon Sheppard the day before it closed.

Nor is it just the ad campaigns which are to blame, although in most cases they betray a sad lack of imagination. **Partners** had a tiny ad and died. **Goldenrod** had a full-page ad and died. For whatever reasons, the arrival of a new Canadian film in town is simply not perceived as a social or cultural occasion of any significance.

It comes as no surprise that people will go to see **Rocky** or **Network** before a Canadian film. The recent experience here suggests, however, that they will go to see almost *anything* – an amateur theatrical production, a Junior A hockey game, a Dutch ballet company, Marty Robbins – before a Canadian film. The only possible conclusion from all of this seems to be that for all the time and money, for all the conferences and debate, for all the position papers and proposals, for all the energy and creativity, for all the dreams and broken dreams, English-Canadian feature films are still not accepted as a significant part of our consciousness – of our lives – either as art or entertainment. And that's the name of that tune. □



Rabid, **East-End Hustle**, and **A Sweeter Song**.

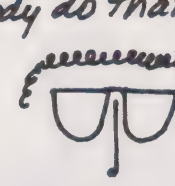
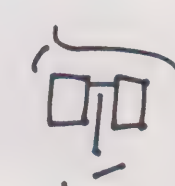
Then there is the problem of the disaffected public. In general, Canadian movie-goers have not yet accepted the vision which its filmmakers offer. Nevertheless, there are those spectators who *do* care and would love to like Canadian films. But the going has been rough. In the following article, written many months ago, Douglas Ord takes *The Far Shore* to task; but his comments go far beyond that film and touch on the very nature of feature filming in English Canada.

an essay on canadian (film)

by Douglas Ord

Great Here

by Ruby Tuesday

My best friend didn't like "The Far Shore". 	"Nobody dries in the water with her boots on!" he said. 	"But you liked Charles Bronson drilling people in the subway in <u>Death Wish</u>. Does any body do that?" 	"Well, nobody makes love in the water," he said. 
"You didn't mind Mia Farrow being screwed by the Devil in <u>Rosemary's Baby</u>. How often does that happen?" 	"Well, the characters were such clichés," he said. 	"You love Clint Eastwood in all those spaghetti Westerns. What do you mean?" 	Who would have thought allegory could alienate the best of friends? 

(being excerpts from an article in progress, by Douglas Ord, which article had its beginnings as a review of Joyce Wieland's *The Far Shore*.)

I

Most English-Canadian films are pretty bad. That seems to be a general consensus. *The Far Shore* was pretty bad; most people seem to agree to that too. When I first saw it I was upset for two days. While I was in the theatre, watching it, I was giggling, but afterwards, when I went home, I was upset. I had had high hopes for this film. Before it was released, I read everywhere that it was going to be very good, that these people, Joyce Wieland and Judy Steed, had given everything they had, for seven years, to get enough money to do it. And then I heard too that Joyce Wieland had made a lot of experimental films, and that they were also supposed to be good. I hadn't seen any — I suppose that I should have before I took anyone else's word about them — but mostly, what I was thinking at the time was: wow, here's an experimental filmmaker who's finally made it into features, and maybe she'll be able to produce something that's intelligent, and sensitive, and interesting to a few people besides other artists. A lot of the art that I see these days that's done by people who refer to themselves as artists seems to be done just for the sake of other people who refer to themselves as artists, and I'm getting pretty sick of that. I thought it was nice to see an artist putting her skills at the service of the public in general, instead of just dismissing it as made up of people who are interested in hockey games, and Archie Bunker, and nothing else.

But I was very disappointed. I suppose I should have had some inkling of what I was in for when I heard that the film was going to be modeled on the life of Tom Thomson, but I ignored that, so as not to be prejudiced in advance. That was a mistake. It was all I could have expected, and worse. Joyce Wieland made a film for the general public all right, at least in the sense that it would be shown in theatres that the general public frequents, and would be the length that they usually expect films to be, and would cost three dollars and fifty cents to see. But that was about all. Instead of making a film *for* artists, she made a film about an artist. And what an artist. After her version of Tom Thomson, I don't doubt that most people who ventured a gamble this time will go back to Archie Bunker. I can't say I would blame them. At least he doesn't speak like a character in a comic strip. And neither does he pretend to be a latter-day incarnation of God.

II

I'm beginning to give up hope on Canadian films. I really am. I go, I'm very responsible, I sit through garbage that I'd ordinarily not endure for 15 minutes. And all because it's Canadian. Of course, there is a certain price the film has to pay for my endurance. Sometimes, when I'm really bored, or my intelligence is really being insulted, I giggle. And that was what I did in *The Far Shore*. I giggled because I couldn't believe in the people. I giggled because they talked like no one I had ever heard in my life, like slogans out of a badly written political pamphlet. But mostly I giggled because if I hadn't, I'd have been very angry that Joyce Wieland had taken someone like Tom Thomson, and made him into a sponge for all of her fantasies about Art, and for all of her neuroses about men, and for that sappy complacent kind of Canadian nationalism that has made just about every feature film made in English Canada appear ridiculous.

Douglas Ord is a freelance writer in Toronto.

III

And so what is a person to do? Stop going to Canadian films completely? That *would* be a sad comment on the state of the art in this country, wouldn't it? But it seems to be what just about everybody I know has done, except for a few real fanatics. Do you want to go to a Canadian film, I ask? And the answer, I'm sorry to say, is usually: Oh God. Another one.

But I don't want to give up completely, really. I mean surely, in a country this big, with all of these Resources, and all of this Potential, there are a few people who could get together and make a good film. And it isn't as if there haven't already been a couple. *Goin' Down the Road*, for instance. And maybe *Paperback Hero*. But what else? Were they just flukes or something? Can't anyone just get down to brass tacks, and say something that's both interesting and straightforwardly honest, without feeling compelled to first wash it in warm pastels, or reduce it to political blacks and whites?

IV

The answer at first glance, to go by the evidence anyway, is no. Then why not? Well, that's a question that seems to be asked a hell of a lot, isn't it, by those people who haven't given up completely I mean, and I'd be pretty pretentious if I thought I could supply the answer, wouldn't I? So I won't even try to do that. And besides, I confess that I've heard so many Answers already, from so many different people, at film schools, and universities, and conferences, that I'm just about overdosed on them too. You know the kind I mean. Like that the Americans have got us all intimidated. Or that we have to compete with their concept of mass appeal. Or... that there's too much caution in the way the money goes out. Or... that there are too many technicians who think they're Federico Fellini. And so on. No, there is no shortage of answers. Or of talk. Except that everybody's knowing what's wrong doesn't seem to have done buggers all to help us make better films. In fact, if anything it's made matters worse, because everyone is so damned self-conscious about knowing what's wrong, that they can't make films that don't insist on telling us what's right. And in the most heavy-handed ways imaginable. So in spite of all this knowledge, and the knowledge that everyone else has essentially the same knowledge, I still end up giggling every time I try to sit through one of those ridiculous films.

The Silent Lake : A northland without people

Tom Thomson



V
And for that reason, writing about Canadian films is a rather difficult task. I mean, I feel sort of compelled to say something, but I can't help but feel too that it's pointless just to provide a few more answers that people can feel self-conscious about. And more self-consciousness is the last thing we need around here.

What to do, then? Well, in a way, it would have been a whole lot easier just to have stuck to writing the review of **The Far Shore**, if only to get rid of all the bad vibes that were left over after I saw the thing. But that's just more negativity, isn't it, and another way out. Another way of avoiding saying anything worthy of your time as reader, and my time as writer.

And yet... I don't want to let go of that film so easily.

VI

The Far Shore is about North. North North North. Pine trees and crystal-blue lakes and pink as a baby's ass granite cliffs. This is a characteristic that it seems to share with a great many Canadian films. Why are there so many films made here about North? Surely it's not just because we're in the northern hemisphere. Sweden is in the northern hemisphere too, and they don't seem to feel compelled to talk about it all the time. Of course, they have their own preoccupations, but those are another matter entirely. No, it's here that North *really* means something.

What does North mean? Well, to Joyce Wieland, in **The Far Shore**, it seems to mean Everything We've Always Wanted to Have About Life, and Didn't. It means freedom. It means being surrounded, immersed, exuberantly smothered in Beautiful Scenery. It means a place where two such exceptional and clean-living people as her painter Tom and her spotless québécoise heroine Eulalie can drink Indian bark tea all day, and then submerge themselves to their necks in the waters of an ice-blue Canadian lake and ball for *ten minutes* without even getting cold. It means skies that never fill with clouds, and insects that never bite, and peace and tranquillity everlasting, to be broken only by the arrival of those rotten, low-down exploiters, The Capitalists.

That's an idea of North that a lot of people in Canada (sorry – translate, on this occasion anyway, Ontario) seem to have. Including the ones who make films. Somewhere, and for reasons too complex or idiosyncratic for anyone ever to understand, they seem to have got the idea that the Canadian North contains all the Romance and Adventure and Passion that life down here in this dreary old pressure-cooker Toronto is just never going to be able to offer. Of course, it's only a coincidence that most of those people live in Toronto, in quite comfortable dwellings at that, with all of the modern conveniences, as the saying goes, and have their studios there, and process their films there, and *definitely* raise their children there, but every once in a while, get into a car or van or plane, with all of that dandy sophisticated camera equipment, to take pictures of all the Romantic Northerners, and wish gosh-oh-jeepers, wouldn't it be great if *we* could go live in the North too.

But they can't, or don't. Family responsibilities, professional accessions, Careers – and after all, the Arts *are* centered in Toronto, aren't they, darling? So instead they make films of their fantasies. And because practically everyone else living South has the same fantasies about North, the films do very well indeed.

Or at least they do well where it counts. Which is to say with the civil servants and the agencies that give out the money. Because oddly enough, in point of fact, not quite everyone who lives South does have all those interesting fantasies about North. Surprise? Because there seem to be a considerable number of people who were born North, and came South. Or not just a considerable number. One hell of a lot. And they're still coming, in ever-increasing numbers,

their farms and land and big old Victorian houses being bought up by those ugly farming conglomerates (that we'll ignore for the time being, darling; they're inconvenient), and by, curiously enough, that growing number of people from South who don't care to live North all the time, but who would like to have a taste of it anyway. You know? So they can make some more wonderfully poignant and beautiful films about what the North is Really Like.

Have they ever bothered stopping to ask any of those people who have come South from North, though? Have they ever bothered asking *them* what North is really like? Try the little groups of Cree and Ojibway and Metis that hang out around the corner of College and Spadina sometime. They're usually good for a laugh or two. Or what about the winos sprawled in the grass around Moss Park Armouries (that's in the summertime, darling). When they're able to talk, they seem to know a hell of a lot about the mines, that just coincidentally happen to be Up North too. Or what about the factory workers, who live in dingy Cabbagetown apartments, or more likely these days anyway (darling), in those sprawling suburban wastelands that reach out in all directions from the city centre, but that (of course) few of our *very* sensible, *very* intelligent young filmmakers ever see, because it's so much more convenient, and *so* much more fun to live downtown.

Ah, but what the hell, eh? Why bother with any of those clowns? After all, what do they know about Art? Or Beauty? Or Good Taste? Most of them can't even frame a coherent sentence, let alone provide any Inspirations. They're lousy material for a documentary, let alone for a feature film.

(And besides, they do make us, uh, rather nervous, you know, don't they? Never know quite what to say to them, to sort of break the ice, to, uh, get inside their heads, the way, um, you're supposed to when you're making a film. Right?)

Ah, but then they wouldn't pay to see a Canadian feature film anyway, would they? They're too busy watching the Fonz.

Thank God for Don Shebib. At least he tried. Once. And did a damned good job too. Those guys from Cape Breton Island were *real*. Has anyone ever bothered trying to figure out who went to see *that* film, and made it so successful? Because the point is that those two drifters were flesh-and-blood human beings, who had lived, and wanted something, and didn't know how to get it. Which is the position, if you stop for a moment and think seriously about it, that *most* of us, rich or poor, find ourselves in. Oh, it's so much fun to have been weaned on the tube at three, isn't it, and to have learned for the last 20 years to want the unattainable. And so much fun, too, to stay sucked in, to go on pretending, always, that it's still within reach, still just around the corner, still just a little bit farther... North.

VII

God, I got sick of Ms. Wieland's version of North. Come on now, folks. Is it really like that? People complain about Canadian films being bland and complacent, and wonder whether Canada is really like that, and destined to remain so. Well, make no mistake about it. The films *are* bland and complacent. But there are several million people working and sweating their lives out, in the North too, of all places, enacting every day their own private dramas, each of which could tell us more about ourselves than a hundred or a thousand of Mr. Wieland's drooling, syrupy, self-indulgent Portraits of the Artist as a Young Suck.

But then maybe I'm missing the mark completely. Maybe the *last* thing we want to know is what we really look like. Because that might be embarrassing, mightn't it?

We English-Canadian folk so like to put on a face, and pretend we're other than what we are. Even a lot of those transplanted Northerners couldn't bear to be seen on the



The Jack Pine

Tom Thomson

streets without their London apparel, their Paris coifs, and their makeup from Diana von Furstenberg. There's just so little glamor in having to bear the burden of a past where Auntie served tea at three, and where the whole family settled down to the hockey game at eight, and where you and the boys snuck off to the park to gulp gin from a paper bag at 10. And after all that's what the name of the game is now. Glamor.

Except I wonder whether we're fooling anyone but ourselves. Because the poses for the most part are just a little bit too proper, the cool just a little bit too earnest. Beneath the sculpted profile and the angled cheekbones, the accent and the person both are as often as not vintage Sudbury. Clumsy, and more than a little bit sad. Playing a game in which he's scared to death of the next move, and at the same time, desperately, helplessly lonely.

Filmmakers play the game too, don't they, by appointing themselves *and* their films in a style blatantly lifted from the Hollywood of the '40s and the Paris of the '60s. And amid all of that pastel-tinted flamboyance, and single-minded striving after Significance, there is very little room for a realistic portrayal of this refurbished Hogtown of the '70s.

We're all so insecure and afraid here, filmmakers no less than anyone else. And what we seem to be most afraid of is that other people will see our fears, will see through the mask of laid-back savoir faire that we so like to project in both our behavior and our films.

Why are we so afraid?

VIII

Ironically enough, it may be people like Joyce Wieland who can provide the clues. Because there's another side to her film career, that is patently different from the glossy rendering of banal fantasy that she gave to us in **The Far Shore**. After I sat through that particular debacle, and with a curiosity exceeded only by my capacity for punishment, I arranged for a screening of some of her experimental films, just to see whether I had been suckered completely by the advance publicity. And I did set myself up for a very disconcerting afternoon indeed. I saw three films, but I'm only going to talk about one of them here, because it plugs so directly into what Ms. Wieland later did to The North in **The Far Shore**.

The film was called **Reason Over Passion**, and was completed in 1968, a couple of years before Ms. Wieland began work on **The Far Shore**. It was 45 minutes long, and *highly* "experimental" in nature. In other words, Ms. Wieland seems to have dispensed with all concerns of conventional form and narrative syntax, and done whatever her instincts told her to. The contrast to the carefully contrived and manipulated scenarios of **The Far Shore** is remarkable.

The film begins with about 10 minutes of what would ordinarily be considered poorly exposed home movie travel footage, shot from the window of a rapidly moving car. people, and not even the slightest sign of human habitation. The chord that it struck, in my memory anyway, was of North, though I suspect that the actual subject may have been the east coast. But it was nevertheless an image of the Canadian wilderness that for me has been the cumulative impression of innumerable drives through northern Ontario and Quebec. Empty. Forbidding. And as often as not, dark and stormy.

But what made the film both interesting and disturbing was that Ms. Wieland refused to let the hills and lakes and forests speak for themselves. Sound familiar? Only this time, instead of endowing them with attributes approximating those of the Garden of Eden, she renders them into a cinematic vision of hell. The manner in which she accomplishes so cosmic a transformation is extremely simple: she wiggles her hand rapidly back and forth directly in front of the camera lens, so that it becomes a frantically jittering grey blur, that sometimes obscures the picture completely, that sometimes jumps like a demented raincloud, that sometimes (thank God) disappears for several seconds at a time, only to return suddenly, and without warning, just when one is beginning to appreciate (?) the grim monotony of underexposed skies and dim green hills that are travelling by onscreen at breakneck speed.

Whew. The experience was pretty exhausting, believe me. That grey blur was one of the most obtrusive and unpleasant cinematic devices I have ever encountered. Even when I closed my eyes to the actual film, the jittering patterns of alternating darkness and light were still there. The effect was inescapable, and cumulatively rather terrifying. I couldn't help but wonder what Ms. Wieland was trying to do.

The impression of this first 10 minutes of **Reason Over Passion** is of a desperate, crazy flight. But from what? Well, the only conclusion that I could draw was that there was something in the landscape itself that inspired Joyce Wieland to begin wiggling her hand in front of her camera, and so make a basically neutral countryside appear more malevolent than, in my experience anyway, it has ever been. And I can honestly say that I'm familiar with the full range of moods of the Canadian north.

No, there was something rather pointedly pathological in Joyce Wieland's treatment of North in **Reason Over Passion**, just as there was something pointedly dishonest about her treatment of it in **The Far Shore**. Or perhaps the two words can be used here interchangeably. Dishonest *and* pathological. Which adjective applies would seem to depend on the context in which each film is being discussed.

What I'm getting at is that in terms of the reality of North, both films are blatantly dishonest. It is not the North that Ms. Wieland is describing in either case, but rather her reaction to it, with no concessions at all to what anyone else might think. In **Reason Over Passion**, there are no people at all; in **The Far Shore**, they are directed as though they were marionettes. But if **The Far Shore** has the character of a highly personal fantasy, **Reason Over Passion** is a complementary, and equally personal nightmare.

And this is why I introduce the term "pathological". Neither film demonstrates the kind of give-and-take that is commonly equated with health. The Canadian landscape is either utterly evil, or utterly good. There is no middle ground. Neither are there any of the resiliency and strength that are required for an artist to step back from his own experience, and give an even-handed account that is going to be more than polemic, or cathartic, or a desperate wish fulfillment. Joyce Wieland, in these two films, tells us about nothing more than the inside of her own head.

IX

Yet the films remain interesting, if only for the reason that the manner in which they are accepted by the society at large can also tell us a great deal about the insides of our own heads. Back to that penchant for glamorous illusion again. We thrive on it, don't we? As long as it makes us look more glamorous too. But what vengeance we wreak on our own much despised and yet desperately needed heritage. Of course we can't let go of it completely. Just as so many of those strutting Yonge Street mannequins retreat in their weaker moments to the familiar but loathed security of the Stanley Cup playoffs, so our filmmakers head North to affirm their Canadian Identity. But to a North photographed from only the best angles, and using only the most sophisticated equipment, please. After all, we'd hate the world to think that just because we're in the midst of all those lakes and trees, we're less au courant than anyone else.

And at the same time, we'll thank Joyce Wieland to keep her paranoid visions to herself, won't we? They're so embarrassingly frank, after all, and rather unpleasant to view. Not to mention highly lacking in propriety. Why can't she be like the rest of us, and save her nightmares for the psychiatrist's office, or better still ignore them completely, the better to carry on and have a good time of it? I mean, what else are we here for?

X

There is of course little likelihood that Joyce Wieland's experimental films will ever be unleashed on the general public. And even if they were, they certainly wouldn't last long. No, they'll go on gathering dust in the basement of the Canadian Film Distribution Centre, along with hundreds of other rather unmemorable records of private dreams and nightmares. Because unfortunately, there are many hundreds of other such films, that dispense with all conventions of form, character, and plot, for the sake of recording its creator's particular vision of primal truth. And it's true that most of these films aren't terribly pleasant to watch because they offer neither the dazzling associations that make the best experimental film very good indeed, nor the comfortable distance that makes for the telling of a good story. What they offer instead are the often rather desperate attempts of a great many people, most of them young, to make some sense out of the world in which they are living. And yes. Most of them are embarrassingly frank. They suggest that beneath this country's calm and decorous official identity, beneath the simplified *modus vivendi* of glamorous pose and gesture... there is nothing. Only a dim world of randomly recorded impressions, orchestrated by precisely those raw emotions that our daily life deems so inadmissible. And we will hide from that world, and from that nothingness, and from those raw emotions at all costs.

Leave those films in the basement. Please.

XI

But aren't we being unduly hard on ourselves? Yes, I know that we've come out of a vast and empty land, the land that inspired Joyce Wieland's terror-stricken flight in **Rea-**

son Over Passion. And I know that we bear now the heritage of the strict moral code that even 50 years ago was indispensable to a culture that still consisted basically of pioneers. But for God's sake, do we have to keep putting ourselves through it any longer? The land is quieter now, and the moral code has outlived its usefulness: it's time we stopped letting our feelings be governed by essentially the same manner of thinking that enabled our ancestors to subdue the forests. The preoccupation with glamour is a bore. It does to play what rigid self-denial once did to our ancestors' work: stifles it beneath a joyless pall of propriety and routine. Except that at least then, propriety could be identified with some kind of necessity. Now the preoccupation with it is merely oppressive in itself. And needless to say – transparently, pathetically – provincial.

A damning criticism, isn't it? If ever there was one.

XI

But in circumstances like these, one simply cannot pull out all the stops. The culture's a little too schizy, a little too borderline hysterical for that. Or rather, perhaps one at some time or other needs to pull out all the stops, just to let go of some of that malignant emotion that's been suppressed for so long, but one should not be so bold as to call the outburst that results Art. Of course, a lot of people do persist in calling their various tantrums Art, and for that reason the word has in recent years undergone a considerable devaluation of meaning. But I do think that the word still means something, just as I think that film can be much more than lately it has been allowed to be in this country.

What then is an artist? Well, it seems to me that these days it's someone who's not content with mapping the interior of our collective asylum, from a perspective of one of the inmates. Neither is it someone who is paid a great deal of money to keep the asylum painted in pretty colors. It is someone who has the strength, as well as the good will and talent, to be able to look at an extremely complex culture – and still see people. And not just see them, but also help them to see one another. If artists have any redeeming worth in this latter day of a very unhealthy civilization, it's to try to get at some of the softness and warmth and love that hide in frightened silence beneath the hard shells we have to assume every morning to go about the various businesses and pleasures that go into keeping the society on an even keel. Because the only thing that can mitigate that terrible fear of nothingness that so governs our lives is the instinctive awareness that other people, beneath their poses, are as frightened and vulnerable and warm as we are. And that all of us are fumbling through the same blind maze.

XII

One of the greatest strengths of narrative film is its ability to offer intimate glimpses into the lives of complete strangers. And such glimpses are exactly what are needed here. There is a vast gap in Canada between the socially sanctioned version of culture, and the lives that are being lived out amid the confusion of city streets, and in the mines and forests and factories of that very North that our filmmakers are so wont to turn into a projection screen for the contents of their own heads. Let them forget about their own heads for a while. We have immediately before us the potential not only for a strong film industry, but also for a revitalized vision of ourselves. Just now a filmmaker could provide no greater service than to help us see ourselves as we are, to show us our masks and our manifold self-deceptions, that we might at least begin to look at one another with the compassion we all deserve.

But that's going to take a lot more strength, a lot more humility, a lot more willingness to fade into the background and just listen, than filmmakers here have hitherto shown. □

The National Film Board of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario have combined forces to organize three programs of short, independent Canadian films. These programs are distributed by the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre. Ian Birnie, Tony Reif and Jean-Pierre Bastien share their ideas about independent production in Canada as reflected by these programs.

independent views

by Ian Birnie, Tony Reif
and Jean-Pierre Bastien



Je Suis Moi by Quebec Love: trying to get the message across

In February of 1977, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the National Film Board developed three programs devoted to Canadian independent filmmaking, which will be available through the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre for screenings nationally this fall. The films were selected by a jury comprised of Tony Reif of the Pacific Cinematheque (Vancouver), Jean-Pierre Bastien of La Cinémathèque Québécoise (Montreal), Doug Eliuk of the National Film Board, Toronto, and myself, Ian Birnie of the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto). Our objective was to select good films which were representative of our particular regional areas, and to build programs broad enough to reflect the national production of independent shorts, documentaries and animation – from the avant-garde to the quasi-commercial. The final programs are not definitive, nor should they be. If they work beyond the merits of the individual films, they will serve to indicate the immense diversity, accomplishment and potential of filmmaking in this country.

Good independent filmmaking is frequently provincial in the best sense of the word – the films, by nature of their personal focus and limited enterprise, reflect the environment of the filmmaker. Certainly, one is struck by the different “looks” of the major film areas in Canada: if the West Coast films seem (literally) flooded with mountains and sea and Orientalism, Ontario is in contrast resolutely urban, its familial presence reflected in middle-class living rooms of the southern sprawl. By turn, Quebec films contrast an urban milieu unique in its grimy realism, to a rural heritage depicted with an almost anthropological attention to detail.

Seen as a whole, the several hundred films considered for the program revealed any number of accomplished shorts from three to 30 minutes in length, but the location of a vitally self-conscious national community of independent filmmakers became more elusive with each screening, each new name. So many films begin well and trail off, out of ideas or techniques or money; so many filmmakers make one film, then graduate, or change their jobs, or make a second film that seems to close off more possibilities than it opens up. The number of independents who are using film as an ongoing means for developing their ideas about cinema, who are defining themselves, in progressively sophisticated terms, as artists, has not increased significantly in 10 years.

What elements contribute to an independent's sense of self-identity? Is money a factor? Tess Taconis, Executive Director of the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, believes the funding agencies have not kept pace with the rising lab costs – making it increasingly difficult to finish a film once begun, or even to conceive one. This is combined with, and undoubtedly contributes to, a growing interest on the part of the filmmaker in selling his film. “Young filmmakers come here right out of universities or community colleges, clutching their films, and the first question is: ‘Will it sell? What kind of films sell?’ There’s no status in being an independent.”

Times change. For those of us who can remember waving away the moths to catch a glimpse of some new West Coast film at an outdoor screening on Toronto's Markham Street, or crowding into a basement room at the Art Gallery of Ontario to ‘discover’ Maya Deren, the do-your-own-thing ‘60s seemed to promise that such alternate ways of seeing were cultural discoveries to be respected, and to be built upon. In 1969, Michael Snow could consider a “regular-hours” screening of *Wavelength* at a commercial cinema on Yonge

Street, no one appearing more surprised than himself at this possibility “to break the stranglehold system that only films of certain kinds, from certain sources, and of certain lengths, can be presented in ordinary cinemas.” Eight years later, Snow's *Rameau's Nephew* has played a handful of times across the country. A new kind of status.

A Canadian independent film community can prosper but beyond money, it requires three things. It needs more outlets for the viewing of films. This means not only more galleries and community centres, but more universities and high schools. Films should be bought and they should be screened more than once. At present, according to the CFDC, only two universities in Ontario buy independent films, and only a few more rent them – a situation almost totally dependent on individual staff interest, thus subject to the vagaries of hiring.

Films should be written about and discussed. A critical community has been instrumental in establishing virtually all the major film movements we know. There are a lot of ideas to be shared, and a lot of traps to be avoided. We do not need to develop a ‘salon mentality’ or write a history. What we need to do is identify creative work, applaud style and visual finesse, and encourage an audience both for our own independents and those from other countries.

We must broaden our awareness of the best work in avant-garde filmmaking, both historic and contemporary. This has been the option and the profit of virtually every other artist in this country. The paucity of film from abroad, the limited facilities for hosting workshops, seminars and retrospectives of internationally acclaimed work, is a disgrace that should be corrected.

What Canada needs, and needs to value, are filmmakers with independent views. This can't be legislated and if the filmmakers don't cherish their unique perceptions, the government certainly won't. If independents can't prove an identity distinct from commercial channels of thought and production, the industry won't provide it. Independents must demand status because they don't fit in and because they won't be co-opted.

“Art feeds on margins” wrote Jonas Mekas in 1960. The independent filmmakers in Canada should begin immediately to take a hard look at their culture, and the films they are making from it and bringing to it. They should take their art and think it through. If they don't, their independent views won't be worth the film they're printed on.

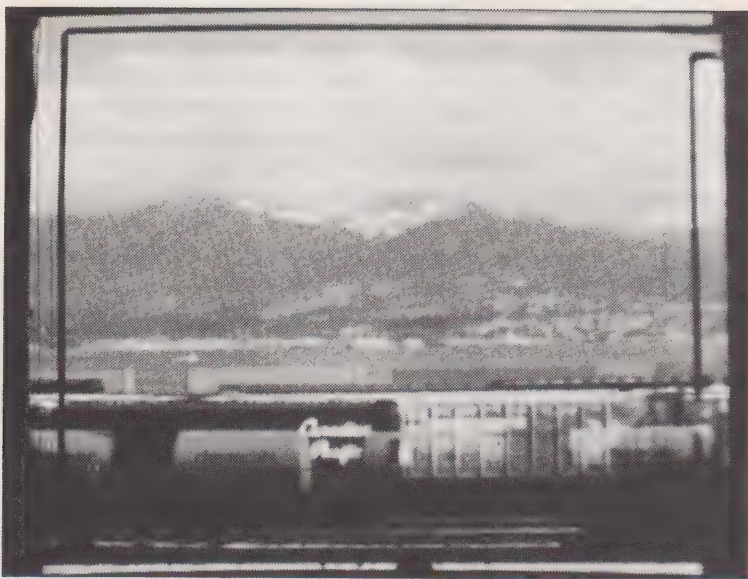
Ian Birnie

Notes From Pacifica

Independent filmmaking in Vancouver has often been inspired by the physical reality of mountains, sea and rain-forest, by the technical example of California experimentation (Scott Bartlett, Bruce Conner, Pat O'Neill), by the relation to the Far East (a concern with Buddhism in various forms). Yet these sources do not quite predict the cultural mix which results in the Vancouver ‘school’, because they do not take into account the individual genius of a Byron Black, Al Razutis, David Rimmer, nor the insularity whereby influences are absorbed from time to time rather than continuously, and a unique offshoot develops a little to the side of any recognized mainstream.

One way of getting an overview, at least conceptually, of much of Vancouver film is to consider it as an exploration of masks – personality masks, the formal masks or layers

Ian Birnie works at the Art Gallery of Ontario and was instrumental in organizing “Independent Views.” With the help of Tony Reif from the Pacific Cinematheque and Jean-Pierre Bastien from the Cinémathèque Québécoise, he put together the program notes from which our article is taken.



A scene from David Rimmer's **Canadian Pacific**

Independent Filmmaking in Ontario

Arriving at a definition of Ontario filmmaking involves the location and analysis of an identity crisis – a crisis largely on the part of the analyst and rarely, if ever, on the part of the subject. Are we, as Ontarians, quintessentially deferential, even evasive, about imposing a characteristic mien to our independent cinema? Is it even fair to expect that a prolific decade of filmmaking, dispersed as it is among single efforts and isolated careers, would provoke a clear line of distinguishing features?

Our critics have an easier time: technically limited, enervated, mundane, grey... why go on? To our credit, there is no shortage of replies. A visually elegant, witty film like Joyce Wieland's **Catfood** caused critic Manny Farber to evoke Manet in the face of her silver, white and red composition. Two films as different as **Spinning** (Wyn Wise and Richard Shoichet) and **Sonauto** (John Bertram), draw a large measure of their effect from a careful attention to visual tone: the former's inky black field in which the spinner spins, the hard day-glow flashes of color through which the latter drives. Who could fail to notice the acute sense of design in Kim Ondaatje's **Patchwork Quilts**, or the rich flush from sepia to color at the beginning of Deepa Saltzman's **At 99**. Lorne Marin's sensitive and complex use of superimposition in **Second Impressions** is, in a minor key, as integral a marriage of technology to meaning as is the exhilarating virtuosity of Michael Snow's three-dimensional landscape film **La région centrale**.

Still, it must be admitted that color and technique are *not*, on the whole, the characteristic attributes of Ontario filmmaking. It is more accurate to point to the modesty of our filmmaking – to its home-made qualities. Critic Bob Fothergill observed that in the early independent features of commercial filmmakers like Don Owen, Don Shebib, and Clarke Mackey, the same concentration on routine actions, and "flat daylight realism" gave rise to the same objections. Looked at now, these films are powerful precisely because they do not depend upon outsized personalities or kinaesthetic editing for their impact. They take their feel and their look from the ordinary lives they chronicle.

Ontario films deal with what is at hand, and they do so directly and rather purposefully. The extravagant camera movement that marks Snow's **Wavelength**, for example, or **Yonge Street** (Jim Anderson), or even **House Movie** (Rick Hancox), is not so much lyric as deterministic; the camera, though curious, has somewhere to go, and is content to move forward without prejudice to the reality beyond its own set course. This sense of being in a world in which the familiar exists to be rediscovered and re-experienced, comes through in the best of these "home movies" – virtually an Ontario genre. Films like Hancox's **House Movie** and Lorne Marin's **Second Impressions** "permanently deepen commonplace, immediate experiences" and define a concept of home in purely subjective terms. Greg Curnoe and Keith Lock – to choose two examples from many – have made interesting films directly involving their friends: the former's **Souwesto** details London, Ontario, in a progression of personal events from 1947 - 1969; the latter's **Everything Everywhere Again Alive**, in which communal life in Northern Ontario is caught in a succession of documentary fragments. **She is Away** by Bruce Elder, evokes absence through elliptical continuity and loneliness through the repetition of several archetypal images.

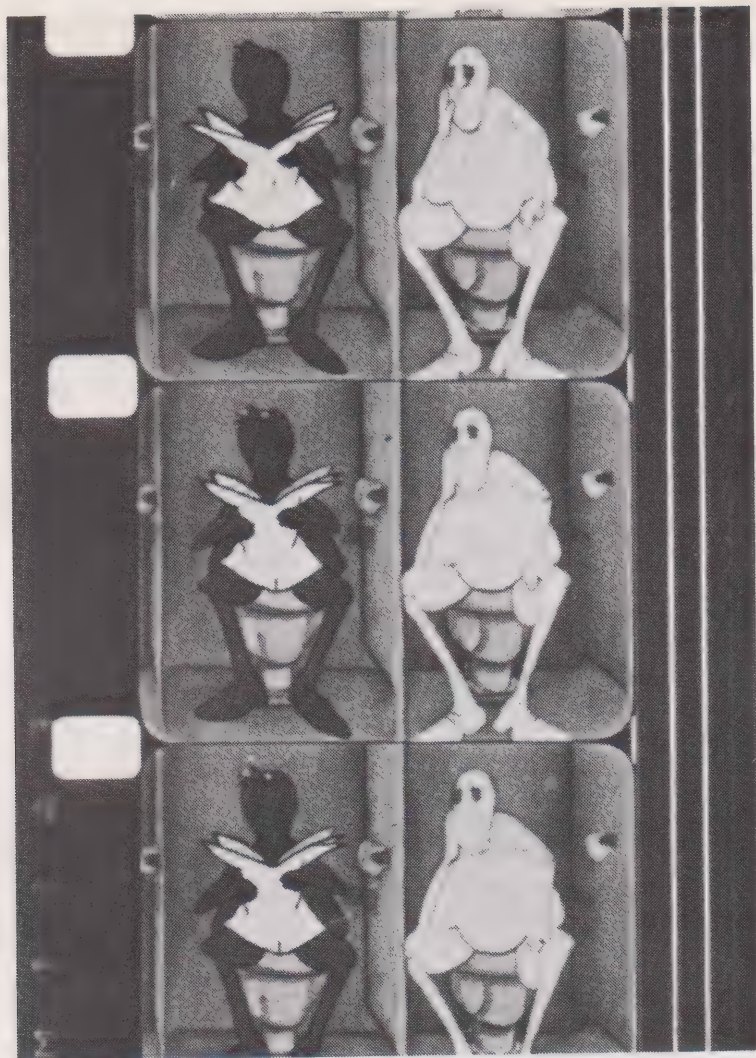
(often involving elaborate optical printing and/or collage) which can represent or express levels of reality/illusion – and an approach to consciousness beyond masks, some way to evoke through the formal a sense of the formless and timeless.

David Rimmer, Ellie Epp in **Trapline** and Gordon Kidd in **Olympus** gain this state through a stripping-down of expression, a serenity of form in which the aesthetic parameters are classically cool, often rhythmically repetitive. (As Robert Fothergill wrote about Rimmer, "taking some scrap of a recorded action, he distills it to an abstract pattern then slowly allows its contents to seep back in like an epiphany.") Al Razutis often begins with a reduced imagery but builds it up through variation into baroque edifices. Richard Patton, Byron Black and Chris Gallagher usually start at the other end, with exuberant overloads of various imagery – often centering around the concept of performance – that burst through finally to some core of meaning or feeling.

In Byron Black's case, performance is more than a filmic metaphor, more like a way of being. Apart from a few completed films that are meant to stand on their own (e.g. the features **Master of Images** and **Holy Assassin**, the short **Om Man Ni Pad Me Hum**), his work is presented in person. Film on the screen is an element around which he improvises wild, pun-filled routines, cosmic comedies that veer between dada and didacticism according to the shifting dynamics of psychic energy, mixed media aesthetics and audience response. Here and in Patton's **Night of Samhain**, performance is celebrated as the expression of energy at play at the moment. Al Sens' cartooning has similar qualities.

In the area of documentary, a major concern of the last few years has been the situation of B.C.'s native people. Dennis Wheller's **Potlatch** deals with the history of cultural suppression and reconstruction, while Jan Martell's **A Little While More Yet** is a personal statement by a young Vancouver Island Indian about his perception of white culture and his people's inability to work with its basic assumptions, its tempo. Another film both diary and documentary is Patton's **Island Journal**, a selection of impressions of the Gulf Islands which, in its rambling, obliquely associative structure, embodies the fabled laid-back rhythm of west coast life in concrete and uncliché terms. As in **Night of Samhain**, the line between the incidental and the sententious, direction and idleness, the put-on and the mystery, is never too clear.

Tony Reif



The pause that inspires in **Da-da-da**

Both Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow have built bodies of highly formal cinema from the stuff of home movies: the "kitchen table/sink" in **Table-Top Dolly**, **Dripping Water**, **Catfood**, **Watersark**, and parts of **Rameau's Nephew**; or the "painter's studio" in **Wavelength** and **A Casing Shelved**.

Some of the best Ontario documentaries – **Patchwork Quilts**, **Lyle Leffler**, **Last of the Medicine Men**, **At 99: A Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch**, and **Campaign**, Robert Fothergill's excellent film on winning and losing in a Toronto election – qualify as home movies for their emphasis on the communal and the familial. Ultimately a bit dull, they are films that succeed without challenge to the social milieu and middle-class assumptions of their subjects. Despite an intriguing handful of films, Ontario filmmakers who attempt a critique of their culture often as not emerge ambivalent and self-conscious. In **My Friend Vince**, filmmaker David Rothberg's aggressive comradery with a petty thief fails to bridge the gulf with little more than shop talk and ego, while Richard Rowberry's interview with his parents in **The Three of Us**, seems determined to provoke a generation gap that just won't emerge. Attempts to deal with the ironies of Italian immigrant life in Toronto have not succeeded from within or without: Peter Rowe's **Good Friday in Little Italy** makes some points through editing but his juxtapositions of billiard halls and religious pageants is no surprise to a culture clearly thriving on contradictions. **Franco** – Salvatore Greco's ambitious Italian-language short fiction film provides a successful dramatization of the conflicts within a New Canadian home, but fails to give their resolution any social or psychological impact.

The manner in which the filmmaker's own unresolved conflicts can overwhelm a film is exemplified by a film like

Cream Soda, where Holly Dale's hidden voyeuristic camera further degrades the occupants of a body rub parlor whose humanity is presumably revealed in the unblinking process.

Looking over the Ontario films in the catalogue of the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, one is struck by the recurrent emphasis on what Jim Anderson calls "the immediate subject matter". Despite the abstract terminology and the musical analogies, one returns to a cinema that takes its environment at face value. This fundamental aspect of Ontario filmmaking emerges directly in films which attempt to heighten the physical world without betraying it. Dave Anderson catches some of the inherent irony in his own description of **Big Wave** as an "unashamedly lyrical look at a plastic tarpaulin covering a vast saltpile" while Neal Livingston's **Aura-Gone**, a single shot of the reflections in the glass facade of a hospital, draws a quote from critic Natalie Edwards – "reminiscent of being left waiting in the car when one was a child" – that may be the essence of Ontario pragmatism and the *sine qua non* of the 'home movie'.

Ian Birnie

The Steady Path of Continuity

Continuity.

I have not stopped thinking of continuity since taking part in the selection committee for the films which make up this program.

Continuity. The film industry keeps going its merry way, film biz is indeed becoming an industry and movies are turning into mere consumer products.

Continuity. Authentic creators of films are finding it ever more difficult to make movies, even within the hallowed walls of Canadian film production (the National Film Board).

Continuity. The federal government announces new fiscal exemptions which, pushed to the limit, are turning Canada into a haven of co-production. The logical conclusion becomes a Franco-Quebec film entitled **The Little Girl Who Lives Down the Lane**, filmed in English in the heart of French Canada.

Continuity. Yesterday's moviemakers are not quite so young as they were but they still go after the same things: David Rimmer and Jean-Guy Noël remain faithful to their initial intent. Yet there are widely differing paths. It is as true for movie-making in the West as it is in Quebec. From sea to sea (since such is the purpose of the federal program: to bring to people the cinema from each side of this continent, not to make one cinema out of several regional ones) one moves from one style to another totally different style.

In reality, the young film craftsmen have as much difficulty in raising funds for their projects in Vancouver as they do in Rouyn or in Hauteville. They make their movies under similar conditions and they never enjoy the authentic chance of proving their worth as filmmakers.

But this artistic solitude is the only link between their respective works. So it should come as no surprise that the only common points between filmmakers in the East and those in the West are common technical points. All have to live every day by the strictures of an economic system which proceeds by Darwinian selection.

Since such is the case...

Film production – whether professional or independent – fairly accurately reflects the concerns of its creators. Every film conveys directly social, political, economic and cultural determinisms which are the product of the society in which these films are created.

One thing I find quite reassuring, nowadays, in Quebec's independent filmmaking; the young people have stopped dreaming about vast and romantic films, featuring the comeliest stars and shot with the largest cameras. They want to make films which relate to people; they want to film life; they want to make the very daily business of living the topic of their work. Although there is still a lot of probing and hesitation, you can feel the orientation all the same.

In that respect, Quebec filmmakers can only be inspired by the heroic struggle started some twenty years ago by

such people as Brault, Groulx, Jutra and others, a struggle which made the first breach in the wall of tradition and constitutes the true beginnings of Quebec filmmaking. Besides, in fighting against hostile elements within the NFB, these pioneers were forced to act as craftsmen. It is easy to forget that Brault, Groulx and Carrière, as they filmed **Les raquetteurs**, fought a battle well worth keeping in mind today. For this was not a battle about a single film. It was a battle aimed at changing the rules of film production.

What is more encouraging is that the young Quebec filmmakers have taken to the more vigorous tradition of Quebec cinema. If they are given the time and the means, they may be one day the pillars of a cinema which will bear witness to a society in transformation.

Jean-Pierre Bastien

Independent Views

Three Programs of Short Canadian Independent Films*

Program I (94-½ minutes)

1. **Life Times Nine** (1973, 14 min., color)
Produced by Insight Films
2. **Le scrapeur** (1976, 20 min., b&w, French)
by Bruno Carrière
3. **Logo & Je suis moi** (1973, 6-1/2 min., color, French)
designed and animated by Quebec Love
4. **Sosoon** (1974, 8 min., b&w)
Computer animation by Georges Singer
5. **Fracture** (1973, 11 min., color, silent)
by David Rimmer
6. **Bridal Shower** (1971, 23 min., color)
by Sandy Wilson
7. **Thought** (1976, 4 min., b&w)
Animated by Darcia Labrosse
8. **Revisited** (1974, 8 min., color)
by Joyce Borenstein

Program II (9-3 minutes)

1. **Second Impressions** (1975, 9 min., color)
by Lorne Marin
2. **Wild Sync** (1972-3, 11 min., color)
by Rick Hancox
3. **Standard Time** (1967, 8 min., color)
by Michael Snow
4. **How the Hell Are You ?** (1972, 12 min., color)
Anim. Veronika Soul
5. **Black Forest Trading Post** (1975-76, 4-1/2 min., color)
by Andrew Lugg

6. **Hallowe'en** (1976, 2-1/2 min., color)
Erindale Class Project

7. **Night of Samhain** (1974, 13 min., color)
by Richard Patten

8. **Les gens heureux n'ont pas d'histoire** (1976, 33 min., b&w, French)
by Paul Tana

Program III (84 minutes)

1. **Canadian Pacific** (1974, 11 min., color, silent)
- by David Rimmer

2. **Surreal** (1975, 4 min., color)
by Kim Cross

3. **Revival** (1965, 12 min., b&w)
by Don Shebib

4. **At 99: A Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch** (1974, 24 min., color)
by Deepa Saltzman

5. **Symbiosis** (1973, 3 min., color)
Animated by David Cox

6. **Wild Onions** (9 min.)
Animated by Greg Hill

7. **Da Da Da** (1975, 1-1/2 min., color)
Animated by Peter Hudeki, Greg Miller

8. **98.3 KHz: Bridge at Electrical Storm** (1966-1973, 12 min., color)
by Al Razutis

9. **Limited Engagement** (1976, 6-1/2 min., b&w)
by Tom Braidwood

* organized by the National Film Board of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario
distributed by the Canadian Filmmakers
Distribution Centre

commercials as a fine art

Most filmmakers aspire to practice their art freely, to be gainfully and regularly employed, and to reach a wide public. Fritz Spiess has succeeded on all these fronts. He spoke at length to Patricia Thorvaldson who prepared the following article with him.

interview and transcription by

Patricia
Thorvaldson

Fritz Spiess was born in Germany into a family of photographers. When he was 16 years old his father gave him a book on filmmaking which immediately prompted his first film, a 45-minute documentary on one of the famous church choirs of Leipzig. Later he completed a three-year apprenticeship in photography with a celebrated portrait photographer of the day, Tita Binz, graduated Master of Photography from the Photo School of Munich in 1949, and started his own commercial photography studio in Heidelberg, Germany.

In 1951 he came to Canada. After two years in commercial photography he became one of Canada's first television commercial film cameramen. He has been Director of Photography on well over 2,000 commercials during his years with Caldwell Studios, Robert Lawrence Productions, TDF Film Productions and most recently with Bob Schulz Productions in Toronto. In the past few years he has also been directing an increasing number of commercials.

Almost all his commercials have been noteworthy for their extremely sophisticated, and often ingenious and inventive, techniques. He himself displays the respect for the tools of his trade which always distinguishes the highly accomplished craftsman.

Patricia Thorvaldson was editor of the National Film Board publication Pot Pourri from its beginnings until this summer when the NFB decided to cease publication.



Sketch by Jaan Pill

"Even if one has worked with an agency for a long time somebody might ask: 'We know Fritz Spiess can photograph green peas, but can he photograph stainless steel?'" Requirements tend to become very specific in the commercial field and cameramen run the risk of becoming typecast. By keeping in touch with the latest technical developments in the industry and by not being afraid of trying out and acquiring new and unproven pieces of equipment and processes I constantly try to fight this danger of becoming typecast. And I must admit that judging by the wide variety of assignments I get, I don't seem to have run into too much trouble in this respect.

In photographing TV commercials I believe in using a variety of styles, whatever seems best suited for a particular commercial. But then, once the choice of approach has been made and agreed upon one has to maintain that style of lighting, camera moves and so on, not only for the 60 seconds of this one commercial, but possibly for other commercials of the same product, in order to maintain a uniform look to the whole campaign. Then, just when you think you have done just about every style possible, along comes a storyboard for a new commercial which requires a different approach again. Now, we all wish we could come up with something really new every time we are facing a new problem, but there are only so many ways, even though the possibilities of different combinations of known techniques are almost endless.

Almost all the commercials I have worked on over the years have been 30 or 60 seconds in length, and in most cases comprising both English and French versions. On the average it takes a 10-hour day for the actual shooting, and often longer. In fact, with all the regulations governing commercial production in Canada it often takes weeks before a commercial is approved in script form, and before it can then go into production and get released, finally, for the air. Sometimes changes have to be made even after completion because regulations change. And besides, various government offices have different interpretations of certain regulations too, like the beer spots, for example, where you can show only so many bottles or glasses of beer in one province, and so many in another, but in no case can any person ever be seen drinking beer.

Each commercial production is always very much a team effort and there has to be great flexibility on everyone's part. It quite often becomes very much a give-and-take situation, particularly when budget considerations enter the picture. But everybody, from the writer right through to the film editor, contributes and gives something to the production. In 99 percent of the cases the agency does the writing and comes up with the ideas for scenes and settings. If locations are required, and if time and budget allow, we go out together with the people who originally conceived the idea and scout for suitable settings. And sometimes one finds something at a location which is much better than one could possibly have dreamed of ahead of time. We had one situation a couple of years ago where we walked into an old kitchen and there was a skylight in the ceiling. Well, who would have ever thought of building a skylight into an old kitchen if we had constructed the set on the soundstage. But there it was. And it was genuine, and it was marvellous for me to work with. I now had a natural light source right there within the scene and I could build my lighting around it – something I wouldn't have thought of otherwise.

Study the Masters

Lighting is really the beginning and end of all photography. Not only does the light which is physically hitting the emulsion cause the exposure on the film, but it also creates dimension. By studying paintings of the Old Masters throughout history it is interesting to observe how the light source

illuminating the subject has been changing from century to century. In early paintings there is no discernable light source at all and as a result these early paintings appear two-dimensional. Eventually, however, as history progresses, one becomes aware of a distinct light source in the paintings which adds depth and roundness to the subject matter. And finally, a startling three-dimensional feeling is achieved by moving the main light source right into the painted scene as in the work of some of the later Italian painters. The same effect too, can be seen in Zeffirelli's recent film **Jesus of Nazareth** which is, in many sequences, and particularly during the Last Supper scenes, brilliantly lit from within.

You see, without lighting you are just taking polaroid snapshots. Lighting remains always my special concern. It is the most important tool a cameraman has available to create a mood and enhance a story, and this is true for feature films and commercials alike.

Some commercials are called, in the trade, an editor's dream, because there may be 6000 feet of film shot which have to be edited down into a 30-second commercial. And some other commercials are a director's dream because of their reliance on careful casting and on a strong perfor-



**"... Capture one for yourself today.
The exotic bird.
The 1974 Pontiac Firebird..."**

The firebird commercial was the most expensive commercial I ever worked on. It was nearly the end of the car. The stunt driver misjudged the speed by half a mile... the jungle sequences were shot in Florida... it was hellishly hot... we actually built a jungle with plants we rented from a garden shop... we built a dolly track all around and painted it green... the plywood alone was \$750... we had to cut out all extra light in order to create the moody feeling we required... we had the car lifted up... we found a plant with leaves big enough to hide the mechanism underneath... we shot the hoop jump at the Toronto airport... but that's a whole other story.

The cost was never worked out but that job was in the \$35,000 to \$40,000 range. "Firebird" ran in the States as well as in Canada, which was very gratifying. It doesn't happen very often that a Canadian commercial is adopted by the States.

—Fritz Spiess



"I do enjoy working with beautiful people like Elke Sommer"

mance by a well-directed actor or actress. Well, there are other commercials which we call the cameraman's dream because they require complicated camera moves and tricky lighting and there isn't much for a director to direct. For example, the subject might be a kitchen appliance. So in cases like this the cameraman becomes also the director. It is, in fact, a trend right now in the States to have more cameramen-directors in commercial productions. And in the last few years I seem to be getting more and more of that sort of thing to do myself.

I have also been working a lot more on special effects. Sometimes special effects are a gimmick, but in most cases they are a necessary part of conveying a story. One of the more recent commercials I worked on involved shooting a complete 60-second sequence of special effects – TV sets floating and assembling in space – and at the same time photographing and directing a star like Elke Sommer, all in one uncut sequence. It was a wonderful challenge. We had to come up, in the optical house, with a lot of new combinations of otherwise long-known optical processes and devices, and it all worked out to a very successful commercial. And I do enjoy working with beautiful people like Elke Sommer.

But to me the most convincing commercials are the straight demonstrations of a product, like a man shaving in 60 seconds. No special effect in the world can give a better demonstration than somebody shaving before the camera, in 60 seconds, without any cuts. This, to me, is the ultimate in selling a product. But then I wouldn't want to do that kind of commercial every day either. As I said before, the interesting thing for me about commercials is the wide variety they offer.

Someone once stated that film and television have become the church of the twentieth century. I agree with that statement, and feel that advertising through commercials on television has a great responsibility. I personally have no scruples about selling soap or whatever other product I am filming. We need soap. What we don't need is all the violence on TV and in film these days. Take two recent pic-

tures, **Black Christmas** and **Black Sunday**, for example. I was asked to see both pictures at special preview screenings. In both instances I left the theatre thinking to myself, "Well, I'm glad I'm not working on that sort of thing." Because I do not believe in selling violence.

Competition Is the Game

There is a lot of criticism heard about people working in the commercial field. But the point is, we live in a competitive world and we all have to face it, particularly the people who want to make films other than commercials. To make a feature film, for which hopefully at least two or three million people will want to give up their free time and spend their money to see, seems to me the most competitive thing in the world. Making feature films is like playing Russian roulette in reverse – only one in six makes it. It's so competitive that anybody who talks against the competitive society shouldn't be in the business of making films. It also strikes me as somewhat contradictory when I see feature films, made by people who don't believe in working on TV commercials, nevertheless advertised on TV in commercial form.

Commercials are, by nature, very competitive, both in their concept and in their production. They do try to influence people, of course. That is the whole purpose of a commercial. It is a strong statement with a definite point of view. A commercial is basically a piece of propaganda. Some of the best documentary (**Triumph of the Will**) and feature (**Potemkin**, **Birth of a Nation**) films have also made very strong one-sided statements and have even been political propaganda. And I do think that when I make a commercial for a particular product I am also making a much more honest statement than in the wishy-washy interview style of filmmaking, which supposedly is truthful, where you ask people's opinions and then make darn sure that in the end you do not offend anybody, that it all comes out 50-50, and that enough people have spoken for the subject in question as against it. I did a lot of soul-searching some years ago and I believe what I am saying here. If a manufacturer brings out a new or improved product I believe he must be prepared to stand up for it in the competitive marketplace. By advertising it, then – especially on TV alongside commercials showing similar products – he already risks unfavourable comparison by the public at an early stage. Yes, of course, sometimes a need for something that did not exist before can be created by commercials, but I do believe that people can think for themselves. They know what the purpose of a commercial is and anybody who doesn't want the product doesn't have to buy it. For that matter nobody has to buy a TV set in the first place.

The Bread and Butter

Commercials are the hub of the film industry in Canada and most of the film crews and technical people who are working on the occasional feature film are the very ones who otherwise earn their living working on commercials. Without this large pool of freelance people who, through their unions, can be called upon as required, we wouldn't have a film industry in Canada at all. The same thing holds true for the sustaining of laboratories and optical houses. The commercial industry keeps them going. It seems, when a feature film goes through the lab, that a great deal of extra attention is paid to the processing of it. But many of the commercial production houses have, for years now, been shooting the equivalent of at least three or four feature films a year. In fact there are so many production houses in Can-

ada now specializing in commercials that it would be interesting to add up the total of their combined, exposed, yearly footage.

I am not frustrated doing commercials, although many people think I ought to be. Look at the available budgets, for example. What one usually has to work with as a cameraman photographing commercials is comparable only to big features. That's in terms of production money spent per minute of final film. And by that I mean actual money for crews and equipment, not considering any star fees, of course. So why should I be longing to do cheap features if it doesn't give me the scope to do what I can do in day-to-day commercial production?

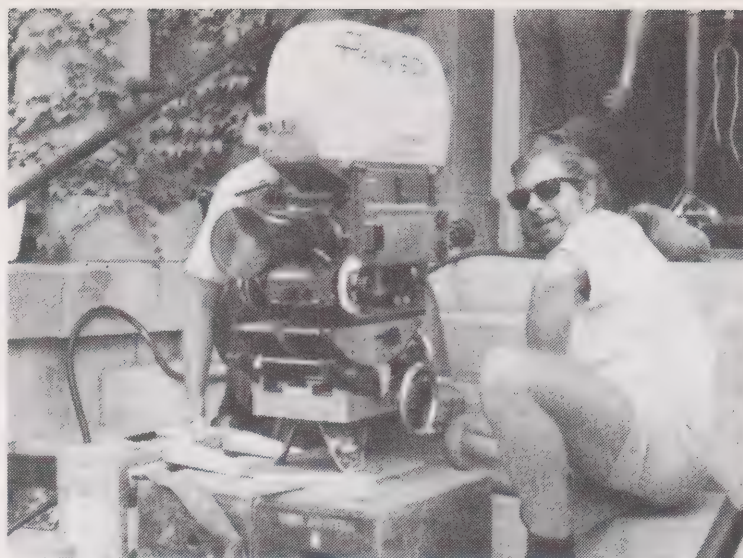
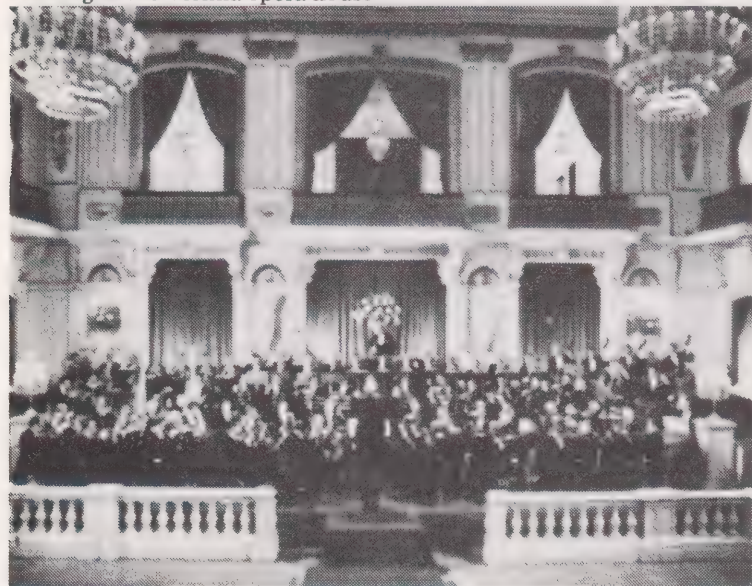
In my opinion the weak point in Canadian feature film production has been the lack of good scripts. Several years ago I spent a couple of weeks in Hollywood, mainly at Universal studios. I was fascinated by this "factory" turning out weekly TV programs like sausages. And I thought their sausages were bloody good indeed. I tried to find and see the formula behind it all by asking a lot of questions of a lot of people, and I found that even scriptwriters use a lot of patterns and formulas. There are many little tricks the commercial writer knows, and as a professional he uses that knowledge as a tool for structuring and pacing a plot. He does not complain about being restricted to exactly 26 minutes for each weekly program, the same way as poets in the past did not question that the classic form of a sonnet always has 14 lines.

Limitation can be a challenge. It requires discipline to creatively express oneself despite prescribed restrictions. Take Michaelangelo, for example. He first and foremost thought himself a sculptor, but the Pope, with whom he worked, told him, "Paint that ceiling!" Having overcome his initial reluctance and doubts he painstakingly completed that most remarkable masterpiece using the sculptor's eye to add a three-dimensional depth to the painting on an otherwise dull, flat ceiling. And today this achievement is what Michaelangelo is most famous for.

Modern Art

So if people say "Gee, I am an artist. I can't possibly let myself down by doing anything commercial," I think they are really kidding themselves. If you look at the great artists of the past and read about their lives you will discover that they did not consider themselves artists in today's sense. They were artisans and craftsmen doing mostly precom-

Filming in the Vienna opera house



Fritz Spiess at his best, behind a camera

missioned work, often under long contractual commitments. And they kept working because they needed the money. J.S. Bach had to support a very large family. His contract with the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig stipulated regular new compositions for the weekly church cantata performances, and to supplement his income he also did some compositions for weddings and other secular occasions. And if he didn't get his work for the church done on time, he didn't hesitate to add new words to the music he had previously written for another occasion. The opening chorus of his famous and seemingly so sacrosanct Christmas Oratorio was originally part of a wedding cantata.

I am often asked whether I think TV commercials are a new art form. Well, my answer is that if whoever asks that question accepts a poster painted by Toulouse-Lautrec as art, then he or she would also have to consider an ad for Chanel No. 5 as art as well. Like the commercials on TV, posters, by the very nature of their design and intended use in display, are advertising and so ultimately selling something. But does that fact exclude them from being art? Is Toulouse-Lautrec an artist when he paints a conventional painting but not when he paints a poster?

Commercials are propaganda – in the wide sense of the word as I like to apply it. So are posters. I believe that commercials are the posters of the television age.

"Any work worth doing is worth doing well." That is what I repeatedly tell young people who want to learn their craft. I am often asked about various techniques – how to light for different situations, how to control color, how to create certain special effects. In meetings of organizations such as the Canadian Society of Cinematographers we all freely exchange new ideas and technical innovations and developments. I am always prepared to freely pass on my experiences when someone asks me. And I do not feel I am giving any exclusive secrets away because, first of all, many of these so-called secrets were already known 10, 20, or even 30 years ago to cinematographers who, equally freely, passed on their knowledge to me, and secondly, because no two situations are ever really alike. One can learn from many different sources, and one should, and has to, learn all the time. But it is important to remember that ultimately one is completely alone to make the final decision about which approach in style and technique to choose for tomorrow's assignment.

In all these years of being active in commercial photography I have never forgotten the words of one of my teachers: "Few people know how much one has to know in order to know how little one knows." □

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ADVERTISING INDEX

Action	59
Alpha Cine Service Ltd.	54
Bellevue Pathé	63
Canadian Film Development Corp.	22
CISCO	7
Cine Audio Ltd.	33
Cinelab	19
Cinnamon	34
Film House	4
Film Opticals	54
George Novotny	69
Kingsway	7
Kodak Canada	6
Mixing House	34
M.S. Art	54
Ontario Arts Council	34
Peter Luxford	33
Racal Zonal	33
Sonolab	76
WSST Productions	70
Wm. F. White	35
World Film Festival	2
Yorkton International Film Festival	33



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OPINIONS

IN AND OUTS OF THE FESTIVALS

Gerald Pratley's article on the Festival of Festivals (*Cinema Canada* No. 36) followed on the heels of the official release of the second annual Festival of Festivals dates, from September 9 to 18 of this year. The announcement of a film festival always creates excitement in the hearts and minds of filmgoers unless, of course, the person also happens to be the former head of a film festival of his own. The thought of seeing more outstanding films from the young German filmmaking community, more new women director's films, a Quebec retrospective, and a Brechtian Cinema Event from the Edinburgh Festival – some of the announced Festival of Festival events – creates eager anticipation among us more mortal beings.

Film festivals that take place in large cities have their own special excitement. There is actually something to *do* besides seeing movies. The electric feeling of seeing the latest and best in film can combine with good dining and other big-city delights. Cannes, of course, is the exception – the sheer volume, and its importance in the film world, carries the day. On top of that, its location in the south of France is certainly a help. Stratford, in the south of Ontario, home of the late, lamented Stratford Film Festival, is a nice place to visit but I never wanted to live there for a week. The alternative, for a resident of Toronto, was to spend more time in a driver's seat than in a movie seat.

Film festivals in small cities have, if not excitement, their own special charm. Special guests and regular patrons of Stratford often remarked on the relaxed, convivial atmosphere that surrounded their week there, in marked distinction to other film festivals. It would be nice if Robin Phillips' theatre schedule could be trimmed a bit to allow for the re-establishment of the Stratford experience. A bit of trimming is perhaps necessary too, from the Festival of Festival's government funding, to return to Stratford its rightful budget. Horror of horrors that government money could be increased to support two film festivals!

Mr. Pratley's budget at Stratford was miniscule in comparison to the Festival of Festivals, but that is a necessary reality. Big-city prices, the expanded size and aims of F of F, accompanied by the larger publicity costs required to attract a greater audience, translate into more money. What a magnanimous, truly Canadian gesture it would be if the F of F could, during its hard, painful scrambling for funding, look after Stratford a bit!

Festival of Festivals will have to sustain itself for many more years than just two before it can even begin to equal the amount of good filmgoing experiences that Mr. Pratley has been responsible for over the years, and is still putting on every week at the Ontario Film Theatre. Nevertheless, gentle chiding is in order for some of the points made in his article.

Gerald Pratley, like Bill Marshall, has been a critic of the way American film distributors and producers have treated Canada as their domestic territory, freely dumping in piles of films and pulling out piles of money. So, when Mr. Marshall chooses to make a public issue

out of the American statement that F of F could not have American films because Canada is U.S. domestic property, what is wrong? After all, as Mr. Pratley points out, it was only an *excuse* anyway. If the Americans thought that a Festival screening would help box office grosses, they not only would have supplied the films but applied pressure to have them shown! Al May-sles, in Toronto recently for an Art Gallery showing of one of his films, was asked why he, as co-producer and co-director of **Grey Gardens**, withdrew the film from the Festival of Festivals. He replied unhesitatingly that it was decided that the showing would not help the film financially. The point, I feel, that Mr. Marshall brought out was that things are so bad that the Americans, while trying to cover up their acquisitiveness, think nothing of publicly stating that Canada is their domestic financial property. "After all, we can freely move our money in and out, right?"

Mr. Pratley also calls for less ecstacy – specifically on the part of film commentators, when writing about film festivals. The message is "more appreciation and less ecstasy". As the recipient of a great deal of both throughout the years, I suppose Mr. Pratley knows what he prefers best, but as amply commented on by film reviewers like Andrew Sarris, unless a film is blown right off the screen by ecstatic reviews nowadays, it tends to go unnoticed.

A film festival, by nature, *is* an exciting event. The latest and best of film talent from all over the world is on display. Last year at F of F, the combination of new German and new women director's films was truly heady stuff. The notable films that are made in the next few years will either be made by or influenced by directors in these two categories. The German **Strongman Ferdinand** by Alexander Kluge and **Kings of the Road** by Wim Wnders, or **India Song** by Marguerite Duras and **Jeanne Dielman** by Chantal Akerman are films that many commentators can become ecstatic over.

Mr. Pratley's points about the neglect that special screenings receive in the press are more telling. In Toronto, the daily press would not be caught dead reviewing a film that was not opening commercially. If it's not going to play in either a Famous Players, Odeon or 20th Century theatre, chances are it will not be reviewed by the Toronto dailies. As of last fall, there was a notable exception – the Festival of Festivals – which places in question the standard reply of the dailies that they review only what is available to the general public. Why then, did the Toronto Star review **Strongman Ferdinand** at the Festival, for instance, when there is no sign that it will ever be shown here again? Why not review the Ontario Film Theatre's notable premieres or other premieres when they occur in the repertory cinemas in the city?

Mr. Pratley also gives the impression that there is something wrong with showing films that have or are about to have another screening locally. To be shown or not to be shown is often the question for films in festivals with commercial distribution lined up. If a distributor is willing to receive nothing in return except a pres-

tige showcasing of his product, with the hope that it will increase interest in it, then surely one of the main functions of any festival has been answered – the promotion of worthy films. Ideally, a festival should help a film gain local distribution. Dabara Films now distributes many of the Wim Wenders films that were shown last year at the Festival of Festivals, perhaps a direct result of that showcase.

The charge of being childish occurs a couple of times in Gerald Pratley's article. Bill Marshall is childish for criticizing American film producers; Canada is a "nursery school" for asking for the films in the first place.

I have always thought that this was a curious epithet. In the age of Piaget, we have come to realize that too often, by throwing the baby out with the growing-up process, we lose innocence, directness and creativity. The Festival of Festivals is a brash youngster trying to survive its first birthday. The Stratford Film Festival is a venerated senior that needs to be allowed to live again. Both require the help and constructive criticism of everyone who loves good films.

Austin Whitten

Member of the Executive

Canadian Federation of Film Societies

CAN THE CANADIAN FILM INDUSTRY CLIMB OUT OF BANKRUPTCY?

Canadian filmmakers and the Canadian government have been talking about the establishment of a Canadian film industry for a long time. Through the Canadian Film Development Corporation, through the Film Festival Unit of the Department of the Secretary of State, through the Film Policy Unit of the same Department, and by way of the two dozen or so feature films made by the National Film Board, several millions of dollars of tax money have been spent to try to get a Canadian film industry launched.

Matching the government expenditure – which includes the salary of numerous civil servants, their travel cost and the cost of numerous meetings and conferences they underwrote and attended – is the expenditure in time and money by private companies and private individuals, both those who actually made films in Canada, and those who only talked about making films. Nevertheless, in spite of all of this activity, we are nowhere nearer to having a viable Canadian feature film industry than we were ten years ago, **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz** notwithstanding. What are we doing wrong?

There are many who would answer that question by saying that we – meaning we Canadians, are not doing anything wrong; the wrong is being done to us, by the film distributors (largely American), the owners of the major theatre chains (not Canadians, for the most part), and by the whole American film industry which, in spite of our protestations, persists in regarding us as merely a profitable pimple on the American market.

Now all of the above arguments are true; we have recognised this, we keep repeating them, ad boredom, but we have not been able to make any change. The fact is that in our efforts to establish a viable Canadian film industry, we are not doing today anything we did not do ten years ago, and the brutal truth is that the Canadian Government and Canadian film makers are being stupid in persisting in actions that lead nowhere. The filmmakers are being stupid in persisting in actions that lead nowhere. The filmmakers talk about quality, pointing to **Mon Oncle Antoine**, talk about quotas, pointing to India, and about government support, pointing to various Eastern European countries. The government for its part mainly listens, pays for studies, and adds each year a few hundred thousand dollars to the budget of the various organisms (as they say in Ottawa, adopting a French word) that it has erected to support the film industry,

such as it is. When are we all going to admit that this exercise could continue for another twenty years with the same lack of results?

I was born in a small island that, until I left it, was a colony of Britain. One of the social burdens under which we suffered was that the population of the island looked outward for excellence, for expertise, for the solutions of difficult problems. Outwards to England, to America, to Canada, even. I was surprised when I came to Canada and found that in many areas of the life of the country, the attitude that so seriously crippled development of my country, my small and underdeveloped country, was to be found here also. It is this basic attitude, this self-denial, unstated but nevertheless real, that cripples us Canadians when we confront many of the problems inherent in our physical and cultural and social proximity to the United States of America, and our historical and cultural ties to the United Kingdom.

So, while we berate the Americans for regarding us as a mere extension of their market (God knows how many times one hears and reads this complaint!) It never occurs to us to think of them as being an extension of our market! Good Lord, compared to filmmakers in every other country of the world, what an advantage we enjoy! Given the advantage point of our proximity to America, we would understand things Americans, including their film market, even better than they understand it themselves. While remaining outsiders, and thus being able to maintain a large measure of objectivity, we are nevertheless flooded with their moods, opinions, shifts in taste, their reading matter and their television. Why have we not been able to take advantage of this? This is really a rhetorical question, because the answer is obvious. We have not been able to take advantage of this because we have not tried to. Not seriously, and not even half heartedly. If there is a problem of definition around this question, it centers around not what we have *not* done, but why we have not done whatever we could have done vis à vis the American film market.

There are two situations that must be confronted and acknowledged if there is to be a breakout of the circular arguments in which discussions on the Canadian film industry have always been trapped. The first situation is so obvious that it would be embarrassing to discuss it here were it not for the rather odd fact that it is hardly

ever talked about or written about in the debate on the future of the Canadian film industry. This basic situation is the domination of the international film market by American production companies.

Outside of India, China and the Eastern European countries the feature films and television series films that most people see, by an overwhelming margin, are American productions. This situation is not going to change in the foreseeable future. In the American market itself, foreign film productions capture, on television and in theatres, only a relatively small part of the market. Less than 5% of the theatre and television films seen by Americans are non-American productions.

The second basic situation that affects the way in which we have been dealing with the problems of a Canadian film industry has to do with a Canadian characteristic that has become apparent to me after five years in Ottawa, watching the workings of the government. This characteristic affects every facet of Canadian life where overall policy decisions have to be made, from the relationship between English and French Canadians, to developing a coherent energy policy or a sensible workable national housing policy, or to developing a policy on film. This is an unwillingness to step far enough back from problems and consider them from the roots up, to get back to "Ground Base Zero," (to use a term gaining currency in graduate Business Schools), and study all the factors affecting a particular problem, in global terms. Because of this, one serious problem after the other has been tackled in a makeshift fashion, with the government running like a fire-brigade from one problem to the next, unable to see the forest for the trees, appeasing here, patching there, and making many things worse. Meanwhile, money gets wasted and time gets lost. This fault of the government extends to other Canadian institutions, including the one we are concerned with here, the film industry.

It is this second situation that has prevented us from coming to terms with the first. The articulate activists among Canadian film makers need to stop being the whiners and complainers that they are, berating the government in briefs and press releases and speeches dealing with the immediate symptoms of their problems, and help the government and themselves to arrive at a position where it will be possible for all of us to come up with overall solutions that will solve our problem altogether.

Instead of complaining about the situations that we are faced with, we should find ways of dealing with them that will be advantageous to us. Example: American companies dominate the world film markets. Could not the Canadian government encourage a consortium of Canadian companies to take over one or two of the major American film companies? With the understanding that while they will be as businesslike and as hardheaded as major film companies are, they will ensure for Canadians a substantial slice of film business. To bring this about is not impossible, nor even very difficult. An examination of the current issue of Moody's Handbook of Common Stock or the Standard and Poor guide will reveal that control of a number of film companies or companies that own film companies could be gained with a tender offer well within the reach of any number of Canadian companies. Furthermore, Canadian banks, with enormous assets, with excellent international operating experience, and with good practise at managing takeover bids, (gained

at the expense of Canadian companies taken over by American companies with their aid) would be well able to aid such an operation. The problem is, have we got a Canadian willing to think that big and to act that big? Has the present government – its Cabinet and its senior Public Servants – got the vision and the courage to take on a task so uncharacteristically adventurous? I think no, but I hope yes, otherwise I would not have written this article. At one financial stroke we would plant ourselves at the heart of the business, getting all the experience and the expertise of a large number of film business professionals, securing for Canadian films a distribution network, (and indeed if we choose our takeover target carefully we could even do something for Canadian publishing, as some of the companies that own film producing and distribution companies in the United States, are also in the book publishing business).

At one financial swoop, we would have done much to correct the problems with which the Canadian film industry labours. Of course there will be other problems, but those will be problems of a different order and of a different nature, and, in my view, preferable to those that beset us now.

As for the Canadian film makers, I know some of you and find you charming and enlightened men and women, admirable artists and people of conscience, of whom there are not enough in this world. I treasure the memory of many of the beautiful films you have made that I have been privileged to see. I regret, however, that there is not a Lew Wasserman among you, nor even a Dino de Laurentiis. Some of you are contemptuous of people whose approach to films is 'too commercial.' Well, with all due respect to your Wilderness Awards and your ACTRA awards and your Etrogs and your prizes won at obscure film festivals around the world (and at some not so obscure), and with all due respect for the high regard many film makers around the world have for you, and the high regard which you have for yourselves, it is going to take people whose attitude to films is largely commercial to rescue you from limbo. Over the past decade you have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in your ventures by trusting people. You have wasted hundred of thousands of dollars of the taxpayers' money. You might not think of it as waste, but that is what it is. No one puts money into producing feature films with the hope or expectation of *not* getting their money back, and via the Canadian Film Development Corporation and the National Film Board this is what has been happening. Measured against the total investment, your accomplishments have amounted to not very much. Measured in terms of impact on the whole world of film, what a waste of talent! You deserve better than you have gotten, better than you have given yourselves.

So, the time has come to discard old ways and to attempt radical new measures. We have been satisfied for too long with scraps and small handfals and noble failure, with thinking small and with merely surviving. You will respond to this article with self righteous indignation, but I for one will find it hard to take you seriously, because logical as your arguments and defenses will be, the hard truth is that collectively you have failed. So, where do you go from there?

C. Alexander Brown

C.A. Brown has produced and directed films for TV and is presently with the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in Ottawa.

TECH NEWS

by Rodger J. Ross

MOTION PICTURE VIDEO

Television has created an enormous new market for films, but neither broadcasters nor filmmakers have been entirely satisfied with the results. On the television side, there is a decided preference for videotape as a program source, while filmmakers complain that television distorts their pictures, often in a less desirable direction.

When a film is to be shown by television, it has to be projected into a television camera in an apparatus known as a telecine. All television installations include this type of equipment, and television technicians are responsible for operating projectors and camera. This division of responsibility between those who make the films and those who reproduce the films in the television system has been a serious handicap in making the best possible use of the film medium in television programming.

In the last year or so, changes are beginning to take place on both sides that will radically alter these practices. With the increase in automation of television station operations, it is now more economical and convenient to broadcast from videotape. According to recent reports, CBS Television Network now broadcasts all evening prime-time programs from videotape, even when the programs were produced originally on film. At some stage prior to broadcast the films must be transferred to tape. This could be done either by the broadcaster who already has the facilities to do the work, or by the film-producing organization or laboratory if the necessary equipment and operating organization or laboratory if the necessary equipment and operating staff can be acquired.

*Long time Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of the CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, **Television Film Engineering** and **Color Film for Color Television**, has won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal, awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, and is presently chairman of the SMPTE Board of Editors.*

A few motion picture laboratories have been installing television equipment, mainly for small-format videotape cassette distribution. But now DeLuxe Laboratories in Hollywood has announced a major expansion of its video duplication and film-to-tape transfer facilities. Several Ampex recorders including an AVR 1, VR2000 with editor, and two VR1200 models have been installed. Included also is a Fernseh color film chain with both 35 mm. and 16 mm. composite and interlock capabilities; a digitally controlled scene-to-scene color corrector; an 2-inch high and low band dubbing system, and film-to-quad and cassette formats.

At the March meeting of the Toronto Section of SMPTE there was a standing-room-only crowd on hand to hear papers and see demonstrations by Motion Picture Video Corp. staffers, showing what can be done with their film and television production facilities. They have installed a Rank-Cintel flying spot scanner and Autocolor-grade, and an Ampex-designed computer control terminal. With a projection television unit, they showed how the computer is used to assemble programs on tape. Samples of commercials produced with this equipment were also shown.

As the trend towards what might be termed integrated television film operations accelerates, we will no doubt see fairly extensive changes taking place in film handling practices. The first – and undoubtedly the most important – change will be the deactivation of automatic video signal level controls in telecine, when transfers to videotape are being made.

Broadcasters adopted automatic signal control many years ago, as an economy measure, and to relieve television technicians of the tedious task, all day long, and into the night as well, of manually adjusting signal levels from the telecine camera, to compensate for shifts in maximum and minimum film densities, scene-to-scene, and film-to-film. But now, when a film transfer is being made in a motion picture laboratory, an entirely different situation exists –

advantage can be taken of the opportunity to make adjustments of the camera controls so as to obtain the most pleasing television pictures, consistent with professional video practices.

Automatic signal level control, so extensively employed in television stations, gives an output from the telecine camera in which uniform peak white and black levels are maintained, whatever variations there may be in maximum and minimum film densities. Many attempts have been made to develop electronic color correction devices as well, so as to give broadcasters completely automatic film-reproducing facilities, but as yet no really satisfactory method of automatic color correction is available.

Manual telecine camera operation enables any desired changes to be made in the color balance of the television pictures, while at the same time adjustments are being made in signal levels to compensate for density shifts. A skilful telecine operator can make slight adjustments in camera control settings to compensate for color shifts between scenes, or the color of the pictures can be changed drastically to produce almost any desired effect. The changes that are needed to obtain best possible television pictures – or any desired special effects – can be determined in a preview or rehearsal session in telecine, and then a computer can be utilized to make these predetermined changes automatically while the film is being transferred to videotape.

Electronic color correction takes place in a very simple signal processing stage – the red, green and blue signals from the telecine camera can be combined in different proportions by raising or lowering the signal levels in the color channels. This is just one of the innumerable possibilities that the transfer process offers for producing special effects. With the aid of an electronic switcher-mixer and special effects amplifier – every television studio has one – effects such as fades, wipes, super-impositions and many, many more, can be

inserted into a program as the transfers are being made, or afterwards, by playing back and re-recording the videotapes.

The greatest advantage of film as an original picture and sound recording medium is that the release for viewing by the public can be either on film or on videotape. For viewing by direct projection on a screen, prints can be made from the originals in any convenient format – 35 mm, 16 mm or super-8. Then, one of these prints could be turned over to a broadcasting organization to be seen by the public on home receivers.

But now, as filmmakers acquire electronic transfer facilities, entirely new and different methods for making use of film can be envisaged. For example, as Jack Sinclair of Motion Picture Video Corp. told his audience at the SMPTE meeting in Toronto,

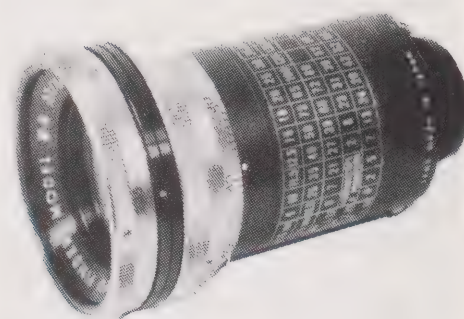
a program can be finished on film and transferred to tape, or finished on tape after the transfers have been made, by electronic editing. In some situations, especially where reversal film is used for making the originals, there would be no need to make a timed and color-corrected print – the originals could be transferred to tape and electronically edited into finished program form.

This method of working will no doubt open up many new opportunities for filmmakers. To make up for the loss of print business, laboratories will no doubt offer electronic transfer services. But with printing, duplicating and optical effects facilities still available, laboratories will be able to give their clients a greatly expanded service, with finished productions either on film or tape, or on both.

\$10.70 (US). Additional supply of splicing tape is available at \$1.40.

Director's Zoom Finder

A new model of the popular 111B 35/16 Director's Zoom Finder is now available from Alan Gordon Enterprises Inc. The new finder has been recalibrated to include all widescreen formats and film ratios from 1:1.33 (Academy), safe-action TV and other formats including Panavision and Cinemascope. The finder also has an easy-to-read scale on the barrel



Director's Zoom Finder

EQUIPMENT NEWS

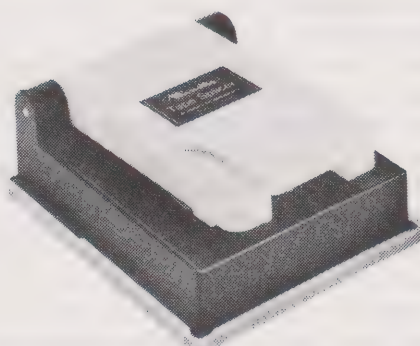
Note to Canadian distributors: We would like to include the names and addresses of Canadian distributors of equipment and services mentioned in this section. Please ask your suppliers to give Canadian sources in their publicity releases. Ed.

Super-8 Distribution Centre

The Canadian Super-8 Distribution Centre has been opened in Toronto to promote super-8 filmmakers and videographers and distribute their works. The Centre is funded by the Ontario Arts Council. Immediate objectives are publication of a catalogue and regular film showings. The Centre is seen as offering equal distribution and viewing facilities for both media. Enquiries or suggestions could be sent to the Centre at P.O. Box 305, Stn. A, Toronto, Ont. M5W 1C2.

New Hervic/Minette Tape Splicer

The new Hervic/Minette tape splicer, for either super-8 or single-8 films, is professionally designed, very easy to operate, and at no time do the user's fingers touch the tape while



Hervic/Minette Splicer

splicing. The splicing tape is affixed to a special paper surface and the tape is transferred from the paper during the final steps of making a splice. A 1 mm "clearing" on the recorded side of the film is allowed so that the sound track will not be affected or damaged. The splicer is made of durable plastic and priced at

which simplifies the selection of lenses in the various formats. The finder helps in two ways – it can show what the camera reveals through the lens with which it is fitted, and it can aid in selecting the best composition by determining what focal-length lens should be used. Price for the Model 111B is \$149.50 (US). Available from Alan Gordon Enterprises Inc., 1430 N. Cahuenga Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. 90028.

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SMPTE MINI-CONFERENCE

The changes currently taking place in television program production methods, especially the increasing use of electronic cameras and videotape recorders in television news, are causing great concern in motion picture circles. Advocates of ENG (electronic newsgathering) are so convinced of the advantages and benefits that they are predicting ENG methods will be expanded into entertainment programming. This was the subject of a panel discussion at the SMPTE mini-conference, jointly sponsored by the Toronto, Rochester and Montreal sections at the Westbury Hotel in Toronto on Saturday, May 7. About 175 registered for this event, as well as a fairly extensive papers program on other subjects.

Panel Discussion – The Film Challenge

Members of the panel included Norman Campbell, well-known Canadian television producer-director; Bill Koch, Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, NY.; Ray Schneider, CBS Television Network, New York; Ed Messina, American Broadcasting Co., New York; Tom Glyn, Chetwynd Films, Toronto; Marcel Auclair, CBC Engineering Headquarters, Montreal; Steve Sulewski, CBC TV Film Service, Toronto; Finlay Quinn, Quinn Laboratories, Toronto; and Rodger Ross, TV Film Consultant, Cobourg, Ont. The moderator was Stanley F. Quinn, director of engineering operations and development, CBC, Montreal.

To set the stage for the panel discussion, each member was invited to make a brief statement of his views on the subject. An animated dialogue developed among the panel members, in which the different views expressed in the opening statements were further developed, and in some cases, defended. This was followed by some questions from the floor, but there was not nearly enough time for everyone who wanted to speak his piece or question members of the panel.

The moderator said, in introducing the session, that while the title on the published program was "The Film Challenge", he hoped the discussions would not develop into a confrontation between film and television, but rather that an attempt would be made to show how each medium can contribute to television production.

It was generally agreed, from the outset, that both media have a place in television, and that film would continue to be used into the foreseeable future. But the trend is towards automated television station operations, in which videotape is more convenient and economical than film. Ray Schneider outlined the work being done at CBS in replacing film with electronic systems. This summer television cameras and videotape recorders will be installed in a Hollywood film studio to produce entertainment programs. This trend was questioned by Ed Messina who said that film accounts for the greater part of the programming on the ABC network. Norman Campbell said he has had a considerable amount of experience making programs with both film and videotape, and he mentioned that each has some good features, as well as some disadvantages. Figures given by Bill Koch showed that film is still being used very extensively in television, and he predicted that this will continue.

Tom Glyn received sympathetic response from the audience when he questioned the economics of program production on videotape, claiming that television companies are not being realistic when they make comparisons with the costs of film production, because they are not including the heavy capital costs of the electronic equipment. Steve Sulewski said that film will continue to be used extensively in television programming, but there is a need for film people to become more aggressive and innovative in the face of electronic developments.

Finlay Quinn pointed out that, in view of the very high costs of producing television programs, maximum use has to be made of the programs, and distribution is much easier when the programs are on film. Marcel Auclair commented that one of the disadvantages of film is the quite large shifts in color that are often encountered between commercials and programs, whereas with electronic cameras and videotape there is much better uniformity.

Rodger Ross referred to a paper presented by Jack Sinclair of Motion Picture Video Corp., immediately prior to the panel discussion. He said what is being done there represents a big step forward, eliminating the division of responsibility be-

tween filmmakers and television technicians in the reproduction of programs on film. When film is being transferred to videotape in a motion picture laboratory, the automatic video signal level controls in telecine, normally used by television stations to save manpower, would almost certainly be deactivated, and every effort would be made to obtain the very best television pictures.

Papers program

Joint meetings between the Toronto and Rochester sections of SMPTE have been an annual event for at least 10 years. This year, the program chairman, Harold Eady, invited the Montreal section to participate, and quite a few members were on hand. A papers program took up the entire morning, starting at 8:45 a.m. with a computer-controlled multi-projector slide and sound presentation by Avcor AV Corp., Toronto, entitled "Life in America". This enormous wide-screen show was repeated after lunch for those who were unable to be on hand in the morning.

In a paper with the title "Film and Electronics", Arnold Schieman of the National Film Board, Montreal, described the electronic facilities that the Board has acquired to make transfers from film to videotape, and videotape to film, featuring this operation with super-8 film.

Gerald Graham gave a well-illustrated paper on the multi-media techniques used at the United Nations Habitat conference in Vancouver last summer. He also gave another paper on Film and Television in Three Dimensions".

Other papers were: "Testing Audio-Visual Equipment Three Years Later" by Ralph Curtis, NFB, Montreal; "Broadcasting Satellite Experiments", Stanley Quinn, CBC, Montreal; "Multi-Track Magnetic Avex System" by Manfred Klemme, Braun of Canada; "Eastman Ektachrome Video News Film, High Speed Type 7250 (tungsten)" by Colin Davis, Kodak Canada; "Dula-Language Photographic Sound Tracks", by Ronald Uhlig, Eastman Kodak Co.; and "Motion Picture Video: A Video Laboratory" by Jack Sinclair of Motion Picture Video Corp. The papers session chairman was Creighton Douglas, Dept. of Supply and Services, Ottawa.

Rodger J. Ross

ROUGH CUT

by Robert Rouveroy C.S.C.

Am very flattered by quite a few letters concerning my observations on ENG. A nice letter from Steven Smith of Williams-port, PA, who has recently gone ENG, spent around \$45,000 getting equipped (RCA TK-76 and JVC 4400) and claims 25 rental days within the first 100 days at about \$400-600 a day. This, for the bad winter months, is quite remarkable, and he'll stand a chance to amortize his gear within the first year. This is as it should be because nobody yet knows how the stuff will stand up to the rough and tumble of free-lancing.

To date I don't know of anybody in Canada who has gone ENG on a free-lance basis, but it will come.

The most logical place for ENG is of course Sports. There is a very interesting article by Robert Riger, a director of ABC *Wide World of Sports*, in the April 1977 issue of the *American Cinematographer* that I highly recommend to interested readers. It seems that the States has whole-heartedly jumped feet-first into electronic cameras.

Pity that the Canadian networks are somewhat conservative. One of the Networks here (the Chief Engineer in fact) told me that the quality of 3/4" tape was too poor for his network and that it would take several years before he would allow it on his network. So be it.

It is true that current electronic gear is still in the 1930 stage Auricon single system style. Editing is still cumbersome and elaborate, and the gear itself not nearly as portable as the one-man-band CP-16. But everything must have its start, right? In 1962 all we had in Edmonton was an Auricon Pro-600 but with the help of a body-brace and a 40-pound power-pack we went portable anyway. It must be axiomatic that engineers and cameramen too, for that matter, have to be hauled bodily, screaming, into the Twentieth Century...

First Cut

All this became rather embarrassingly apparent at a combined SMPTE/CSC meeting the other day at Ryerson in Toronto. Ed Digiulio, the president of Cinema Products, the maker of the CP-16, was our speaker. He started forthwith on a violent diatribe, a sort of open letter, to the TV industry. The gist of all this was that portable electronic camera gear was cumbersome (qualified true), fragile (we don't know that yet), expensive (very true), and incapable of getting as good a picture as 16mm (utterly false, as any inspection of the major networks newscasts or ABC WWS will show you).

Frankly, that last observation was rather idiotic. He points out the occasional glitches, drop-outs and skews on a few news items, totally forgetting the miles of over and underexposed, lightstruck, pushed-beyond grain-structure, ruined by labs 16mm film that any newscameraman has to contend with and that we, mercifully, never see.

He claimed that tape itself was more expensive than film because directors don't want the risk of ending up with damaged or drop-out tape and therefore won't re-use it. Even there he was not correct as a few minutes with your calculator will show. In Canada, 3/4" tape sells for around \$21. for twenty minutes. But 22 minutes (2x400') of ordinary newsfilm, say 7242, will cost you around \$90, never mind the processing which adds another \$60. at least. So there you are looking at around \$150. as against \$20. You could afford to shoot your brains out!

The only point he didn't bring out was the comparative quality of the news item. The ENG revolution came so quickly to the States that the film-cameramen got caught with their pants down.

It seems that the operation of electronic equipment falls outside the jurisdiction of the cameramen's union, in this case the IATSE. The NABET gleefully stepped in and manned the cameras with their people. Now this has the States all in a flap because very quickly a few basic problems became apparent.

You see, the true news cameraman is a breed all by itself. True, many of us have started out in news, quickly passed on into documentaries when we had a chance, finally ending up with our pie in the sky, commercials or features, if we could make it. I'm guilty of taking this course, as most of the cameramen I know are. It is rare to meet the occasional DOP who has never shot 16mm and who regards it as so much spaghetti, or Mickey Mouse. I feel they've missed a great deal of experience and excitement that usually shows up in their calcified approach to cinematographic problems.

But there is a true breed of news-cameramen who can't conceive of doing anything else, and who bring to their news stories an expertise, an excitement that clearly shows up in their work. I sometimes think I can recognise their work when I spin the dial on my TV set. They leave an imprint, a personal signature.

Prime Cut

Well, these people are sadly missing in the ENG field. For whatever reason, they have been side-stepped in the networks' headlong rush into ENG. And it shows. While the image quality is infinitely clearer and "live", the story quality often deteriorated in stand-up, talking head, 1960 feeling, badly composed, utterly blah shit...

And there is the rub. It is the Nut behind the camera that matters, not the nuts in it.

Final Cut

Poor Mr. Digiulio. The restive audience at his talk was clearly annoyed. Many points he made were quite valid, but in the end it became rather embarrassingly clear that ENG was cutting sharply into his sales figures and will continue to do so until news, at least, will be 100% electronic. Now don't get me wrong! I'm sorry about that too, because I'm first and foremost a film cameraman. To date, no electronic camera can do what I can do with a Panaflex, thank the Great Gaffer in the Sky, but I can see that it won't be long, another decade or so, and I will have to change over

Toronto's "gimmick man", Robert Rouveroy C.S.C., is president of Robert Rouveroy Films Ltd. and shares ownership in Cinimage.

ROUGH CUT

too! And those of us who do, and keep up with the ever changing technological revolution, will keep their daily bread buttered somewhat. Now what did I hear about this Thompson-CSF 5 lb Microcam? Jesus, my lens weighs heavier than that!

Mix

Ed Digiulio then came forward with what we really had come to see. The Steadicam, a contraption of harness, springs and levers that absolutely magically smooths out camera movements. Goodbye dolly shots! a demonstration film showed the absolutely superb tracking shots in films such as **"The Marathon Man, Rocky, Bound For Glory"** and others. Just really unbelievable. I went like a shot for the first try-out. Now those of you who know me are aware that I am rather "big". I prefer to call myself that, instead of some less flattering description.

The harness drops easily around me and is strapped very tightly indeed, causing some shortness of breath. The countersprung arm fastens to my hip and the camera, balancing on a swivel joint, magically straightens itself out. Moving around, the "feel" is superb. One is constantly aware of the possibilities in moving, panning, running, getting that totally impossible shot. But it is much more difficult than I imagined. I'm told that there are really only three experts on the west coast, and one on the east coast, who can consistently bring the camera to a dead stop. The inventor, Garrett Brown is, of course, the undisputed master in its operation. The only Canadian expert is Matt Tundo, who has considerable experience with the thing. He made me aware of some of the limitations of the Steadicam. For one thing, it is



Steadicam

really a production tool, and anybody who rushes out to buy one (at around \$18,000 each, as far as I could ascertain, from Alex L. Clarke Ltd.) to shoot news or documentaries with it will be sadly disappointed. The slightest bump causes the camera to swing wildly. The shot has to be pre-planned and rehearsed carefully, as it is very hard to come to a full stop without the camera wiggling. It is, therefore, totally useless in a crowd or in documentaries where the end-position of the subject is not known.

Cutaway

Of course I invented something that can do the same as the Steadicam does, oh, years ago, that works well in crowds. I offer it now to you, free and without charge. It is called the EHS, which stands for Extraordinary Homo Slither. Camera firmly packed on the shoulder, one pushes steadily through the crowd with a modified duckwaddle, a sort of a tango inspired slough, meanwhile, firmly holding one's breath for the entire 400 feet. If you don't mind the occasional titter or suspicious stare, I promise you it'll work better than the Steadicam, in a crowd that is. I must admit it works somewhat better if you're "big". You can at least wipe that smile off their faces, if the occasion arises.

Main Track

It is a pity that in the film business, very few inventions can be patented.

Look at the Steadicam for instance. It must truly be classified as the most innovative accessory to come out in a long time. Anybody who has ever been involved in an intricate dolly shot knows what I mean. Dollies are expensive, time-consuming and very limited. They are a sonofabitch to set up on uneven ground, practically impossible on stairs and very hard to conceal on retreating shots. Some of these shots take a week to execute properly. With the Steadicam they are a relative snap. So what happens? Look again at the April 77 issue of the American Cinematographer. Panavision has come out with the Panaglide, a similar contraption to the Steadicam, but using gas and hydro-pneumatic leverage instead of more simple springs. Given the Panavision track record of building superlative quality in their gear, I'm sure it will be a little bit better or more versatile. For instance, both systems use TV monitors for framing the shot. Now, when tracking backward, with the camera pointing to the rear over the shoulder, it becomes very hard to keep framing properly as all the movements are reversed. If you don't believe me, try it with an Arri SR or the old Bolex Pro, or some types of Eclair.

Well, Panaglide solved this problem very simply. They reversed the TV scan on the monitor.

Robert Gottschalk, president of Panavision, claims he got the idea for the Panaglide from Japanese food delivery boys about five years ago. Seems they had a gimbal and springs system attached to their bikes that kept soup bowls from spilling during transportation. I don't know where Garrett Brown got his idea. I'm sure they got their ideas independently. But let me lay this on you; I do remember seeing a similar contraption used in Indonesia where I grew up. This must have been around 1939, or 1940. It seems that little old ladies made some extra money cooking tasty dishes for the take-out trade, or rather, delivery trade. Food was stacked up in close fitting trays, 7 to 8 on top of each other, combined in a contraption called a *rantang*. Delivery boys had a thin-gumajig on the back of their bikes, full with rubberstraps, old inner tires or maybe a corset strap or two and were able to transport up to 14 of these *rantangs* simultaneously. I remember that delivery of one *rantang* entailed careful rebalancing with stones or re-adjusting the straps. It was an eerie sight seeing the *rantangs* float-



Panaglide

ROUGH CUT

ing majestically by while the bicycles bounced along the ruts and crevasses of the pre-war Asiatic roads. Dammit, I could've been the inventor of that Panaglide or that Steadicam. Let's see, Garrett used springs, and Robert G. used gas and hydro-pneumatics. Now I have still some old rubber bands, and if I ask nicely I could lay my hands on some garter belts, and who knows! Combined with some foam and scrap aluminum I could come out with my superdolly at, let's see, around \$39.95. Hmmm...

Mix

The Canadian Society of Cinematographers now reaches its tentacles overseas. Harry Makin, past president of the CSC, informs me that during his stay in the USSR (for a CBC/BBC co-production on the Russian Winter Arts Festival), he drafted our first Russian member, be it honorary. This happened during a New Year's dinner in Leningrad. As is wont over there, vodka flew rough and fast. During the toasting, when it was Harry's turn, he promptly invested Leonid Mirzoyev, the second unit cameraman on this shoot. Leonid is a Senior Cameraman at the Moskva studio's and is usually employed in the public affairs and documentary section and is, according to Harry, a dynamite cameraman. Welcome Leonid! Good thing he's a honorary member though; I can just see Roy Tash CSC trying to collect his dues! Given the problems Roy has here in Canada, it would be rather insurmountable over there.

Harry also has a warning for other cameramen going to Russia for a shoot. If lights are needed (you're usually not allowed to bring your own, at least not big ones) make sure you order every single cable, connection, plug, extension, clamp and what not that goes with it. Seems Harry ordered three Brutes, and yes, they showed up on time, but minus the cables to plug them in. Harry did most of the shooting with available light and with two portable battery lights that somebody shipped sort of by accident, as an afterthought.

Harry, by the way, quit his post as president of the CSC this May. I think I speak for all of us members of the CSC in thanking him for a job well done. The CSC has grown considerably during his tenure and has gained status and clout under his administration. Thank you Harry! □

CANADA'S BEST!

That's saying a lot, but to film makers it automatically means. — Bellevue Pathé. It just goes to show that good news really does travel fast in an industry where you have to produce — or else.

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ORGANIZATIONS

AMPIA

Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association

347 Birks Building,
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1A1
(402) 424-4692

The Vital Two-Thirds and **The First Harvest**, two films on Alberta's forests by JEM Film Productions Ltd., have won national Awards of Excellence in the "Best Public Relations" film category at the Canadian Public Relations Society national conference in Halifax in June.

Generally, only one award is given to the best film, with "Honorable Mentions" to other films if they meet the standards, says Gene Zadvorny, Chairman of the awards program. This is the first time in the history of the awards that this 'Award of Excellence' has gone to two productions in the same category. They were exceptional films.

The films are both half-hour television productions, **The Vital Two-Thirds** being sponsored by Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, and **The First Harvest** jointly by the department and Procter & Gamble Celulose Ltd. Both films deal with Alberta's vast forestry resources, stressing the importance of conservation and good forest management.

The JEWI team consisted primarily of William Marsden, Producer; Ken Jubenvill, Director; and Richard Tomkies, Script Writer. This group has worked together for the past 13 years, having achieved numerous major awards. Jubenvill and Tomkies, for example, are the only Canadians to have won the top "Gold Camera" Award of the U.S. Industrial Film Festival four consecutive years.

A recent Syncrude film which the group produced - **Time Of The Tarsands** - was awarded the "Best Industrial Film" citation in the 1976 Alberta Film Festival, and also won an award for the best original music score.

JEM Film Productions is an Edmonton-based company presently engaged in two more productions for Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, dealing with coal and reclamation. The firm is also planning another documentary for Syncrude Canada Ltd.

Len Stahl

BCFIA

British Columbia Film Industries Association

Vancouver, B.C.
916 Davie Street,
(604) 684-4712

It was with considerable regret that the Executive received a request from President Fiona Jackson that she be relieved of her office because of personal pressures. Fiona is presently visiting family in Ireland, due back late June.

Vice President Patty Robertson currently signs Acting President and says she is willing to take on the top spot if time and other obligations permit.

Brief To Roberts

A new statement of our stand on feature film production - which has not changed but needed to be re-stated - has been presented to Secretary of State John Roberts, compiled by half a dozen hard-working and dedicated members of the Executive and/or the Feature Film Committee. At or near the beginning it says: "It must be recognized in real terms, that Canada consists of much more than Ontario and Quebec." It then goes on to propose a West Coast CFDC office... Capital Cost Allowance (Tax Shelter) for seed money investment... re-establishment of CFDC mandate... regional (West Coast where applicable) voice in co-production arrangements... re-examination of legislated film quota and levy (some progress indicated here)... and retention of CFDC Special Investment (Low Budget) projects.

Copies have also been sent to Provincial Secretary Grace McCarthy and Communications Advisor Dave Brown in Victoria.

Pay TV Hearings

Although we did not apply to make a formal intervention in the Pay Television Hearings in Ottawa, the Executive did lay out seven points in a letter to Communications Minister Jeanne Sauvé.

(1) Pay Television must encourage independent film production.

(2) Pay Television must not siphon programming from "free" tv.

(3) The CRTC must hold hearings on Pay TV in British Columbia.

(4) The Pay TV Corporation must invest in independent film productions as well as purchase Canadian films.

(5) The majority of programming funds must be spent on Canadian programming.

(6) Whether the system is pay-per-program or subscription, the programming

should reflect a majority of Canadian content with significant regional representation.

7) The Pay TV Corporation should be understood to be for distribution only, and not engage in any "in-house" film production.

CFTA

Canadian Film and Television Association

55 York St., suite 512
Toronto, Ont. M5J 1S2
(416) 363-8374

Gunter Henning, President of Western Films Limited, Winnipeg, was re-elected president of the Canadian Film and Television Association at its 20th annual meeting held recently at the Inn on the Park Hotel in Toronto.

Findlay Quinn, Quinn Laboratories Ltd., Toronto, was elected Vice-President of the 95 member association which represents the private sector of the Canadian film industry including production, laboratories and distribution.

Gunter Henning emigrated to Canada in 1953 from his native Germany where he had studied drama, music and cinema. He began his working career in this country as a newspaper reporter/editor and freelance cameraman. In 1959, he formed his own production company, FM Films Ltd., which in 1964 was renamed Western Films Limited.

Subsequently, Western Films has expanded into motion picture laboratories and rental centres in Winnipeg and the West Coast. Henning has filmed, directed and produced several hundred documentaries, TV films and TV commercials in addition to a range of TV film assignments, some of which have won international awards.

Henning stated that the Association represented most of Canada's private film production. He has promised an accelerated effort to increase the use of the film medium in Canada in both the private and public sectors. In this connection, Henning mentioned his continuing attempts to further convince the federal government of the major contributions the industry can make to the overall cultural and commercial scene in Canada.

In the process, the government should get out of the business entirely of producing its own sponsored films, and should be more helpful to the industry in getting greater access to CBC programming requirements.

Other directors elected were: R.H. Anderson, Canawest Film Productions Ltd. Vancouver; Reg. A. Batten, Rabko Television Productions Co. Ltd. Toronto; R. Ronald Brown, Century II Motion Pictures Ltd. Edmonton; Robin Chetwynd, Chetwynd Films Ltd. Toronto; Henry Michaud, SDA Productions Ltee, Montreal; Glenn Robb, Crawley Films Ltd. Ottawa; and Michael Smith, Film Opticals of Canada Ltd. Toronto. W.R. Smith of Kodak Canada Ltd. Toronto, was also elected to the Board to represent the associate members.

CSC

Canadian Society of Cinematographers

22 Front St. West
Toronto, Ontario

The Canadian Society of Cinematographers held their annual meeting on Saturday May 14, 1977 at Bellevue-Pathe Ltd. in Toronto. A new executive board was elected by acclamation for a two year term. President: Norman Allin CSC, Vice President: Robert Rouveroy CSC, Secretary: Terrence Culbert, Treasurer: Roy Tash CSC, Membership: Bob Bocking CSC, Education: James Kelly CSC, Public Relations: Carol Betts.

A report on education and training was given by James Kelly confirming another successful year for the Assistant Cameramen's Course. He recommended that a certificate be presented to those who successfully completed the annual Assistant Cameramen's Course and that the names of those graduates be circulated among the active CSC members.

Ken Gregg and Fritz Spiess volunteered to fill positions for auditors.

The out of town chapters reported their good and bad news from Montreal, Winnipeg, St. Johns and Ottawa. Halifax and Saskatoon CSC chapters will soon be set up.

Ken Post reported on the Council of Canadian Film Makers, emphasizing the importance of ACTRA's support of the CCFM.

Al Rubin will sit at the Canadian Film Awards pre-selection committee this year.

Harry Makin, stepping down as president, expressed special thanks to Roy Tash and Bob Bocking on the society's 236 old members, 27 new and its 8 sponsors. In closing, he stressed membership participation and involvement by all CSC members in the activities of the Society.

A producer and his investors can be granted special and large tax incentives if their film can meet certain requirements and become "certified" as a Canadian production or a Canadian co-production.

These requirements, designed to benefit the Canadian film community and the general economy, can be abused. A cameraman can be hired in order for the producer to obtain the necessary points for certification. Then, using any number of excuses, the producer can have him fired and replaced by someone from outside the country.

The CFDC and the Secretary of State's office do not have the necessary resources to uncover and investigate possible abuses. It is our responsibility to bring these to their attention. CSC is interested in helping ensure the integrity of certification. Regardless of whether you are a member or not, please contact Jim Kelly, 461-769-8815, if you are aware of what seems to be an abuse.

CFEG

Canadian Film Editors' Guild

P.O. Box 46, Terminal A
Toronto, Ontario
(416) 485-3222



We're mad! A certain Canadian film magazine has wounded our pride and lessened our credibility. Their policy when listing accredited film editors is a negative one... they refuse to put those three little letters - cfe - after our names.

So what's in three little letters? More than you would expect! Those letters are not handed out indiscriminately. They are conferred upon members of the Guild only after many years of editing experience, and they indicate the highest degree of proficiency and talent in the editing field. We are proud to be able to advertise our expertise by using 'cfe' after our names, and find it infuriating that a magazine supposedly concerned with building a bigger and better film industry in Canada would be so insensitive as to ignore the significance of those letters.

It is to advantage of the entire film industry that creative people strive for excellence. To deny them the recognition of such an achievement is both demeaning and unjust.



CCFM

Council of Canadian Filmmakers

Box 1003, Station A,
Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1G5
(416) 869-0716

The Annual General Meeting of the CCFM took place in Toronto on June 7, 1977.

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved, and the following reports were made on this year's business: treasurer's report, chairperson's report, Pay-TV report, British Columbia Film Industries report, Syndicat général du cinéma et de la télévision (ONF) report, Cultural Climate report and Ontario election report. The above minutes and reports are available from the CCFM.

The following resolutions were proposed by the executive, discussed and passed:

1) Background

Between 1966 and 1976 three Secretaries of State have requested or negotiated various forms of voluntary agreements with the distribution/exhibition system in attempts to secure a place in Canadian theatres for Canadian films.

Secretaries of State LaMarsh, Pelletier, and Faulkner threatened legislative action if such voluntary arrangements proved unsatisfactory. Secretary of State Hugh Faulkner, in introducing the latest such agreement in 1975, told the Commons Committee on Broadcasting that he would proceed with legislation if this attempt did not achieve the desired results.

All three Secretaries of State termed the agreements unsatisfactory. The present Secretary of State has expressed his dissatisfaction with the latest such agreement which resulted in a 37% success rate for Famous Players on its quota commitment and 27% for Odeon. (These results were predictable based on the experience of other countries.)

Therefore, be it resolved that CCFM rejects any further use of such agreements as a substitute for legislative action, and calls upon the present Secretary of State to honor the commitment of his predecessors to proceed with legislation of an effective quota and levy.

2) Background

Films produced in the last year demonstrate that the definition of 'Canadian film' is loose enough to permit essentially non-Canadian films to qualify.

Be it resolved that CCFM recommends an immediate and effective tightening of the definition of a Canadian film to prevent essentially non-Canadian films from qualifying for the Capital Cost Allowances or for CFDC funding.

continued p. 69

BOOK REVIEWS

...towards a national cinema
**MOVIES &
MYTHOLOGIES**



by Peter Harcourt

AN EIGHT PART SERIES FROM CBC RADIO

**Movies and Mythologies:
Towards a National Cinema**

by Peter Harcourt

CBC Publications, 171 pp.

Peter Harcourt is a man who knows and loves movies. He has an extensive background in international cinema, having worked for a number of years at the British Film Institute and served as intermittent contributor to such journals as *Film Quarterly* and *Sight and Sound*. His previous book is called **Six European Directors** and is published by none other than Penguin. Yet alongside the respected international film scholar stands an ardent cultural nationalist, a man firmly committed to the expression of a Canadian film viewpoint. Harcourt is then the ideal critic to define, through reference to other country's films, what constitutes a national cinema in general, and, through study of this country's films, a peculiarly Canadian national cinema.

CBC Radio commissioned him to do just that and, in a series of broadcasts during the autumn of 1975, he probed the qualities of national cinemas, always using patterns found elsewhere as possible guideposts to discovering similar patterns in Canada. Those broadcasts have been con-

Jim Purdy is administrative director of the NDWT Theatre Company and is a regular contributor to Scene Changes and Arts Bulletin.

verted into print and published under the title, **Movies and Mythologies: Towards a National Cinema**.

Harcourt admits from the outset that the topic is rather broad and that his short book is but a sketch of some of the territory to be covered. He also claims that the original broadcasts, and now the book, were intended for the casual movie-goer and not the film-buff. That's an ominous admission and the text soon validates the reader's apprehension. Harcourt's rich background and well-honed perceptions are limited to what eventually amounts to a capsule history of Western cinema. An all-too familiar map is once more charted, from Edison through Griffith to the Hollywood Heyday, with side-trips through Lumière and Méliès and on to Renoir and the New Wave. They're all there, the Neo-Realists and Fellini and Antonioni and Godard and Bergman, the British cinema of the early sixties and the New Hollywood of the late sixties, all the figures and schools of film analysed in scores of other short histories of the movies.

Harcourt, however, is here for slightly different reasons, not just to look at the films but to answer two basic questions: "What are the economic and cultural conditions that encourage a national cinema to flourish, and what are the means that will allow talented individuals to work within it?" Thus, Italian Neo-Realism, both in its socio-political content and documentary technique, was a purge of false attitudes, a rejection of two decades of fascism and the dominant movie aesthetic of larger-than-life glamour; the British Free Cinema represented the expression of the Angry Young Man generation, etc. If these sound like obvious observations, that's often how the book reads. Whole national cultures are summoned up in a few paragraphs and film movements described and placed in context in a couple of pages. Much of what is in the book is perceptive. It just doesn't go deep enough to constitute really original analysis.

A real sense of different national cinemas often gets lost in the too simplistic history. For instance, Harcourt's extended (three pages) analysis of Fellini's career is never described as part of an Italian cinema. In fact, he asserts that by the

early sixties, Italian cinema "began less and less to reflect the reality of the Italian nation". Really? At a time when Antonioni and Fellini were peaking, when Pasolini and Bertolucci were about to emerge, when Visconti and DeSica were reasserting themselves, and when Wertmüller was preparing herself in the wings? I don't believe that Harcourt doesn't actually consider these filmmakers part of a healthy Italian cinema. He just never had the time to complete the argument and place these directors within their cultural context. One wishes he'd been given or taken the time. He needn't write sketches for casual movie-goers. There are a lot lesser talents already handling that market.

The one national cinema that does emerge a little more fully is the American one. This is partly because Hollywood was the world's most dominant film culture, imposing an all-pervasive influence over much of the globe, and partly because there's already a wealth of material examining that culture. It is the only cinema Harcourt describes that did create a national popular mythology to give an unconscious expression to the preoccupations, fears and aspirations of its country. He examines the way Hollywood's formula movies, genres like the Western and the Gangster pictures, embody contradictory tensions relating to themes such as violence and success. These otherwise dangerous tensions are contained within the safe framework of movie fantasies that unconsciously raise the tensions only to wish them away.

This critical approach to American film is also not original with Harcourt. He even quotes Robert Warshaw's oft-quoted, classic twenty-nine year old essay on the gangster to illustrate his argument. And more recent and much more thorough studies (Barbara Deming, *Running Away From Myself*, Michael Wood, *America in the Movies*, and Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America*) have already defined this relationship between Hollywood and American society.

Brevity also creates simplistic arguments that often mislead and even distort the case being made. **Goldiggers of 1933** is cited as an example of escapist musicals which ignore so-

cial contradictions. What Harcourt fails to point out is that the chorines dancing in oversized coins and joyously singing "We're in the Money", never get to finish their number. The sherriff arrives from the creditors to close the show for lack of funds. A coin is actually ripped off an otherwise semi-nude Ginger Rogers. When asked why there's no money, Rogers sarcastically quips, "It's the Depression, dearie." Even in Hollywood, the show didn't necessarily always go on.

But what does all this historical analysis have to do with Canadian movies? As an emerging nation (in the cultural sense anyway), Canada must develop the myths that will give us a sense of cultural identity. If we turn to other countries to study alternative means by which these myths are developed, it is obvious that the American model doesn't apply. Other countries, however, have never developed the mythical richness, at least in films, achieved in the U.S. What Harcourt does find in cinema elsewhere is a tradition of personal expression, fostered in different ways under different economic circumstances. A similar kind of tradition needs to be developed here by applying some of the measures taken elsewhere. First, get films made, no matter what they're like; second, influence the distribution-exhibition system to make it more conducive to Canadian production; and third, create a film culture whereby movies from throughout the world will be seen in Canada.

The first is obvious, though not readily achieved. The second point suggests a way of promoting the first. We must establish a distribution-exhibition system not monopolized by U.S. films but which provides access for "foreign films", both from Canada and from abroad. Equally important, government support must not just be through direct financial assistance but through laws – tax laws – that ensure a reasonable portion of box office revenue be returned to Canadian production. These too are obvious and basic suggestions (or are they demands?) repeated in all discussions on the Canadian film industry, but obviously in need of much repetition.

The third requisite, a film culture, is not one normally propounded, but it too makes complete sense. Other film conventions besides the American ones must reach Canadians, both filmmakers and public, to help open

up imaginations to other possibilities. This also implies that a Canadian Nationalist cinema must still be part of an international cinema, that distinctively Canadian films must stand beside the best from other countries. This does not mean that **The Hard Part Begins** must be like **Nashville** or like **That'll Be the Day**, but that it must achieve in its own way a standard of quality in terms of drama, insight and style comparable to such films. Of course, the only way Canadian films can achieve such international standards is to be wholly nationalistic, to be wholly themselves rather than imitation American or British or French. In this way, Harcourt's nationalism is a quite normal longing common to all other culturally developed countries. It's just that in other countries it is accepted as a natural phenomenon, something that's just there without even thinking about it, like breathing. In Canada though, people like Harcourt have to defend and fight for it.

Harcourt concludes the book with what he calls a long overdue "celebration" of Canadian film. Two basic qualities emerge that Harcourt tries to use as a basis for the definition of Canadian cinema – its roots in documentary and the recurring theme of the search for self-definition. But again the time is not taken to explore the repercussions of either of these qualities. How does the documentary influence differ from that of other countries at other times? Harcourt has earlier in the book described

location, how Italian Neo-realism re-defined the aesthetics of cinema, how more light-weight equipment was basic to the emergence of the free-wheeling French New Wave, how the social grittiness of Britain's New Cinema related to its generation and time. It is not enough to point out how Canadian features developed their approach from documentaries. One must also question how Canadian films compare to these earlier examples and how our filmmakers compare to those working in a similar style today, such as Peter Watkins and Ken Loach.

Harcourt finds the theme of identity fairly consistent to most features:

"...one of the recurring elements in Canadian movies, even in French-Canadian movies, concerns the failure of our society to provide meaningful roles for us. Hence the recurrence of films about adoles-

cence, about drop-outs or criminals, or simply about wild and energetic characters like Pearson's "Paperback Hero" or Carter's "Rowdyman" – characters who end up acting destructively because there is nothing else to do."

This may be true, but he never really tells us how these films differ from many others, mostly from the U.S., he himself describes earlier in the book. Do not **Bonnie and Clyde**, **Easy Rider** and **Five Easy Pieces** and dozens of other films fit this description as well? One also gets the feeling that Harcourt is often stretching to make his case, forcing his theme on films. He even quotes for a half page a vituperative argument from **A Married Couple**, citing a fairly universal domestic squabble as indicative of "very Canadian" characters "striving to define themselves through arguing". His analysis of these under-analysed films is indeed refreshing and often fascinating, yet I can't help but feel that on the whole they fail to live up to the critical yardstick he would set for them.

As much as I sympathize with the motives for Harcourt's "celebration", I find it just a bit premature. The much touted boom in Canadian film in the early seventies was a beginning which established, once again, a lot of promise, promise that, also once again, remains unfulfilled. Even granting the thematic complexity Harcourt wishes upon many of these films, what does that tell us of their quality as cinema? Does it necessarily make them good films? One could easily take a bad John Ford film and find within it themes parallel to his better films, but that still does not improve the film. How many Canadian directors have an assured control of the medium with which they can develop their own style to communicate their own vision? I don't think it fair to describe many of the films' tentative clumsiness as a distinctive and mature style. Certainly some, not all, Quebec directors have grown beyond the awkwardness found in English Canadian pictures. Claude Jutra and Michel Brault are filmmakers who not only have something to say but the means with which to say it. But most Canadian directors are still struggling to master the medium, to reach that point where they can begin to explore the themes Harcourt mentions with greater richness and clarity.

In the end, Harcourt never really discovers why films from Canada

BOOK REVIEWS

don't quite match up to those of other countries. How can a country such as Switzerland, with its small population, its multiple languages, its lack of any great cinematic tradition, suddenly produce filmmakers such as Alain Tanner and Claude Goretta who win international acclaim? Canada's failure can't just be reduced to a destructive distribution-exhibition system and lousy economics. That's not the whole reason. The cultural forces that allow such filmmakers as Tanner and Goretta not just to begin, but to actually grow and mature into very fine artists ultimately elude Harcourt.

Still, despite the many complaints I've lodged against it, **Movies and Mythologies** is a valuable book. By writing a survey of Western cinema as seen through Canadian eyes, Harcourt is beginning to articulate a Canadian critical perspective towards film. For the first time anywhere, the movies from Griffith to Coppola are described in relation to a Canadian viewpoint and for the first time Canadian films are given a place in the scheme of world cinema. Even if on the whole those films are not quite up to the task Harcourt sets for them, his articulation of where they should be is one important prerequisite to getting them there.

Jim Purdy

Changing,

by Liv Ullmann

244 pages, Knopf, \$9.95

"I love close-ups. To me they are a challenge. The closer the camera comes, the more eager I am to show a completely naked face, show what is behind the skin, the eyes; inside the head. Show the thoughts that are forming. Even when I tell myself I am expressing a role, I can never completely hide who I am, what I am."

Although Liv Ullmann is expressing the meaning of her screen work, the quotation is also expressive of her autobiography. Her ability to express herself on the screen is also true of her writing style. Her autobiography, simply called *Changing*, is much more than just a facile account of yet



Liv Ullmann and Ingmar Bergman

another movie star's life. Deviating from chronology and superficial recollections of people she has met, Miss Ullmann's book is an absorbing self-portrait full of exact and intimate detail and shading. It is a book of crystal-clear focus; a search for definition and clarity.

The book's most appealing quality is its loose, seemingly undisciplined, structure. Professional writers might cringe at its haphazard style but it's precisely this style which is so refreshing; sounding spontaneous and shimmering with all the brilliance of an uncut diamond. Refining and honing her apparent disregard for verb tense would only do damage to the overall appeal.

Just as Ingmar Bergman, the man with whom she shared five of her 38 years, loves agonizing close-ups, Miss Ullmann takes us into her privacy for a penetrating close-up of a woman, a mother and lastly an actress. She exhibits all the blemishes, all the guilts, all the scars and all the hurts.

Her wandering monologues sound candid. She is honest about herself; yet, she respects the rights of others. When telling of the particularly sad effects Hollywood success has had on one couple she knows, their names remain her secret. For what is important are the results of too much success, the excesses and the distortions; the who of the story is really unimportant.

Other autobiographies of screen personalities too often parade a collection of other screen personalities that reads like a *creme de la creme* — a *Who's Who*. Above such obvious pretensions, Miss Ullmann presents a sensible (though she may doubt it), down-to-earth person who is not at all impressed by the company she

often has to keep. The reader can identify with her because, like us all, she is wracked with the same fears, frustrations and anxieties.

She has dated Kissinger and dined with Brezhnev. "Brezhnev looks vain, but I like him immediately when he takes my hand and says he loves **The Emigrants**. Nixon's make-up is melting and I feel sorry for him. He would have made a marvellous tragic figure in a Bergman film had he been a better actor... We eat airborne caviar and drink airborne vodka served by airborne waiters but the pact remains uncertain. Do they decide our fate over dessert?"

Her life story, her philosophies, her beliefs and experiences at time sound like the outpourings of a patient to her psychiatrist. Self-analytical, *Changing*, at times, reads like an exercise designed to help her reach her own conclusions. For clearer perspectives, she steps outside the physical limitations and talks about herself in the third person. "And when the bitterness and hate and despair were gone, she was sure she had experienced love and had been enriched... Only when it was all over did they become true friends," she writes of her relationship with Bergman.

A cinematic god, Bergman is humanized in her book. She tells of a man frightened, a man of recognizable shortcomings and a man of unquestionable genius. She writes: "After a while I was the object of his jealousy, violent and without reason. Friends and family, even memories, became a threat to our relationship. We had been a revolution to each other and became each other's hell. I craved absolute security and protection. He yearned for a mother. His dream was the whole woman, all

Lee Rolfe is the film critic for the Winnipeg Tribune

BOOK REVIEWS

in one piece, but I crumbled into small anxiety-ridden pieces at times. His hunger for togetherness was insatiable."

Her autobiography is the story of a contemporary Nora, who, like Ibsen's heroine, suffers through the process of growing up and casting off her expected duties, always trying to please others. She identifies strongly with the character she has played so many times in Europe and North America. "I found respect when I became independent, ceased to cling. Ceased to rely so desperately on others for my own happiness."

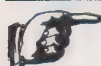
When she goes into great detail describing Nora, her fears and her motivations, we know and she knows we know, that she is describing herself. But, no doubt, it's easier to do in the manner she chooses.

Although much of *Changing* is about meditations and reflections, the book is sparked and heightened by moments of unexpected wry humor. "In the car I wonder if I am having a nervous breakdown. And, if so, can I give it artistic expression?" In the midst of a violent battle with Bergman, she barricades herself in the bathroom. As he breaks in the door, a slipper flies into the bowl.

Throughout the book she tells of a vulnerable person and we connect with her immediately. It makes a story of a fairy-tale princess, globe-trotting and doing as she wishes, wonderfully normal. We can relate to her even when she says, "Normal people don't rush about the world the way I do."

Changing is one of the finest autobiographies I have read. However, I hesitate to dredge up such superlatives as "finest", "best" and "most" since inevitably as soon as the words are said, along comes another work which either equals or surpasses the work being praised. So until that book comes along – and it will come along – *Changing* is the finest, most poignant, most rewarding autobiography I have read. Well worth even the hard-cover price.

Lee Rolfe



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ORGANIZATIONS

continued from p. 65

3) Background

Canada's national airline, Air Canada, now uses Canadian music and magazines. However, their films are programmed in the United States with the result that no Canadian films are used. Florida travelogues sponsored by Avis and American airlines are shown.

Therefore, be it resolved that CCFM reiterate its request that Air Canada film programs include Canadian films and be programmed in Canada to make this possible.

4) Background

Secretary of State John Roberts called for an inquiry into Canadian broadcasting in a recent speech to the Canadian Cable Television Association convention in Calgary. He stated in that speech that such an inquiry is needed to find new ways of meeting the objectives of the Broadcasting Act and that television fosters the development of Canadian talent and programming.

This Annual Meeting of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers urges the Government of Canada to establish a Royal Commission with broad terms of reference to enquire into and report on the state of broadcasting, communications, and the cultural industries of Canada (including broadcasting, film, the performing arts, the recording industry, the publishing industry) and to make recommendations which will enable these cultural industries to fully serve the public interest.

We suggest that such a Royal Commission give particular consideration to:

- the present or probable effects of fragmentation in the Canadian broadcasting industry
- technical changes in the methods of delivering and distributing materials produced by the cultural industry and the probable effects of such changes
- pay television (the introduction of which might be delayed until such an enquiry is completed)

– the problem of the Canadian production industry, and how such an industry is to be financed and maintained in the long term as well as the short

– the control of the various producing, distribution and exhibition systems, especially in broadcasting and film, and how such control affects or may affect the kinds of products that are or will be offered by such systems to the Canadian public.

5. This Annual Meeting of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers has noted the suppression by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation of the television production *Tar Sands* for what are apparently purely political reasons. We deplore and denounce this act of political censorship, and demand that this program be shown to the Canadian public who have paid for it and who are entitled to see and judge its merits for themselves.

6. This Annual Meeting of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers calls on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to immediately and unequivocally commit itself to the fullest use of Canadian talent in all its programming, and particularly to the use of Canadian performers, writers, directors and technical personnel, and most especially to the use of such Canadian talent in its drama and variety programming.

7. This Annual Meeting of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers urges the Government of Canada not to proceed with those provisions of proposed Bill C 43 which would give to the Minister of Communications discretionary powers of direction in relation to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission or any other agency that may come under control of the Act.

The election of individual members to the new executive committee were as follows: Kirwan Cox, Natalie Edwards, Sandra Gathercole, Allan King, Peter Harcourt, Finn Quinn, Connie Tadros and Ralph Thomas. They will be joined by representatives of the member organizations: ACTRA, BCFIA, CFEG, CSC, DGC, IATSE 644C, IATSE 873, NABET 700, SGCT(ONF), and the Toronto Filmmakers' Co-op.

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- George Anthony, Toronto Sun.



BUD CORT and SAMANTHA EGGAR

in WHY SHOOT THE TEACHER

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From the book by **MAX BRAITHWAITE**

Produced by **LAWRENCE HERTZOG**

Directed by **SILVIO NARIZZANO**



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FILM REVIEWS

Jean Beaudin's

J.A. Martin photographe

d. Jean Beaudin, asst. d. Michel Gauthier, sc. Marcel Sabourin, Jean Beaudin, dial. Marcel Sabourin, Jean Beaudin, ph. Pierre Mignot, ed. Jean Beaudin, Hélène Girard, sd. Jacques Blain, set dec. Vianney Gauthier, m. Maurice Blackburn, lighting. Kevin O'Connell, cost. Vianney Gauthier, l.p. Monique Mercure, Marcel Sabourin, Luce Guilbault, Denis Drouin, Denise Proulx, Jean Lapointe, Yvon Canuel, Guy L'Ecuyer, Paul Berval, Mariette Duval, Pierre Gobeil, Ernest Guimond, Yvon Leroux, Henry Ramer, p. Jean-Marc Garand, p.c. National Film Board (Mtl), 1975, col. 35mm, running time 101 minutes, 13 secondes, dist. NFB.

A while ago, I had the opportunity to see an exhibit of photographs by Louis and Auguste Lumière in stunning pastel color taken around the turn of the century. The Lumière brothers were not only technical innovators, but also pioneers in the idea of using film to document the real world. Like their films, these early color photographs evocatively present a world that is no more — a peasant girl carrying water, a family out for a drive in the country, an old man smoking a pipe. I thought of these old photographs while watching *J.A. Martin Photographe* a film which in many ways, works on our emotions like an old photograph album.

J.A. Martin, a country photographer in nineteenth century rural Quebec, covers the usual events of family life: the births, marriages and group portraits, etching them for all time on little pieces of mirrored glass. His apparatus is clumsily pre-Kodak with a huge wooden camera and plates that had to be chemically sen-



sitized in a darkroom immediately before exposure. The lens is uncapped for fifteen seconds with a warning to hold very still, giving that stern rigid look to our ancestors of the last century.

Once a year, Monsieur Martin packs his apparatus into a rickety wagon and heads down the narrow country paths to his more remote customers. Even though the trip is extremely difficult, it represents an annual escape from wife and large family. This year, however, strong-willed wife (Monique Mercure) decides to leave home and kids and go along with hubby, and the trouble starts there. He does not like it, and neighbours and family are scandalized; a nineteenth century rural Quebec woman just does not do these things. But Mme. Martin is no ordinary woman and off they go together. The saga is both scenic and emotional for the trip pulls them together and helps them revive a stale fifteen year old marriage. As they travel, we relive the old farm houses, the country weddings, the small town hotels and lumber mills of another world and another time.

This film is obviously a cameraman's dream, for its strength lies not in a riveting plot, but rather in the mood set by the extraordinary visuals. And this is, indeed, a moody film, Scandinavian realism at its most painful; the shots are long, the compositions are static and the dialogue and dramatic action are caught almost in passing in brief snatches generally out of sight and out of mike. All is well if you are predisposed to be with the film; the physical beauty

of the sets and photography can certainly waft you away in a nostalgic euphoria. The trouble comes if you start fighting the film, for then the extreme stylization becomes as jarring as overloud muzak. Why does absolutely every sequence have to finish with a fade to black? Why are most of the shots so murky that you are straining to see what is going on? (Even the outside shots manage to be continuously grey and overcast as if the nineteenth century never saw the sun.) and finally, why must all the dialogue be muttered off mike as if we are listening to the proceedings through a keyhole? Of course the extreme stylization is deliberate, for in a cinematic form the film is imitating the spirit of still photography. We do not see a scene from beginning to end; we have a snapshot of it. We are faded into it, after it has started, and faded out of it, before it ends. The shadowy lighting, makes this color film almost black and white, and again we have this snatched quality as the camera captures the subject momentarily passing through the light. These visuals are made all the more relentless because there is almost no music in the film, in fact almost no sound at all except for the ticking of clocks and the squeaking of wheels. The unkind would describe this movie as a two hour long title sequence, or a lugubrious imitation of Bergman without any of Bergman's redeeming mysticism.

As I watched the film, I wondered how the filmmakers were going to insert the anti-English scene which is now obligatory in all film produced

Film Credit Abbreviations: d.: Director. asst. d.: Assistant Director. sc.: Script. adapt.: Adaptation. dial.: Dialogue. ph.: Photography. sp. ph. eff.: Special Photographic Effects. ed.: Editor. sup. ed.: Supervising Editor. sd.: Sound. sd. ed.: Sound Editor. sd. rec.: Sound Recording. p. des.: Production Designer. a.d.: Art Director. set dec.: Set Decorator. m.: Music. m.d.: Music Director. cost.: Costumes. choreo.: Choreography. l.p.: Leading Players. exec. p.: Executive Producer. p.: Producer. assoc. p.: Associate Producer. p. sup.: Production Supervisor. p. man.: Production Manager. p.c.: Production Company. col.: Colour Process. dist.: Distributors. narr.: Narration.

FILM REVIEWS

in Quebec. After all, here was a photographer wandering through the back woods of Quebec - so where are the bad guys? *Les maudits Anglais* in this film are the Wilsons, owners of the sawmill, uptight, nasty and of course, filthy rich. In photographing the workers at the mill, M. Martin finds child labour and exploited workers and he has a fight with the English foreman. Presumably, everyone can now leave the theatre suitably purged and with all stereotypes comfortably reinforced.

But the core of this film is not political, and even the evocative scenes of rural life are captured almost *en passant*. If the film is about anything it is about Mme. Martin: her coming out after fifteen years of marriage, and her quiet yet forceful search for an identity. "Do you still find me physically attractive," she timidly asks her deadpan husband, and then yells at him for not having paid enough attention to the children. Monique Mercure, in the title role, is alive, fiery and vividly sympathetic. Her performance is easily the best thing in this film. Its power is in little touches, brief moments of truth which resonate with a woman's experience in any age. Her face can switch from emotion to emotion, often counterpointing, two conflicting feelings at the same time, and she alone makes the irritatingly thin plot at all convincing. Her recent prize at the Cannes Film Festival is well deserved.

It is easy to see why this film has received so much critical attention. Its stylistic consistency and lugubrious relentlessness makes it both unusual, and in many ways, a refreshing, change from the pabulum which passes for movies these days. What is more puzzling is the fact that this film has been an enormous success in Quebec. It has been playing to large Montreal audiences for over three months, and ranks with the most popular feature films ever to have been produced by the National Film Board. Despite its obvious artistic qualities, its bleakness and slow pace make it a difficult film to sit through. Whereas the outside may find it inward-looking and stylistically indulgent, it is obvious that this film has touched its Québécois audience deeply and personally. It really is like an old photograph album whose faded pictures are of passionate interest: but only to friends and the immediate family.

Ronald Blumer



Living the high life in **Ragtime Summer**

Alan Bridges*

Ragtime Summer

d. Alan Bridges. **sc.** Ratch Wallace. **ph.** Brian West. **ed.** Kirk Jones. **a.d.** Ted Watkins. **o. des.** Natasha Kroll. **m.** Lucio Agostino. **sd.** David Bowen. **l.p.** David Warner (Henry Buchanan), Honor Blackman (Mrs. Broswell), Trudy Young (Clarissa), Cec Linder (Dr. Hogarth), Tim Henry (Ralph), Robert Hawkins (Lloyd), Joey Davidson (Sam Carter), Jon Granik (Mr. Carter), Lois Maxwell (Mrs. Hogarth). **p.** Deanne Judson & George Willoughby, **p.c.** Judson Pictures Inc., 1977, **color**, 35mm., **running time** 104 mins. **dist.** Danton Films, **première** Odeon, Peterborough, Apr. 28, 1977.

Ragtime Summer is a rather hard film to review fairly. It has qualities of tenderness, literacy and even elegance that set it apart from the average. In fact, I find it the most sheerly likeable Canadian feature since Don Shebib's **Second Wind** last year. At the same time, the new film is clearly so much less effective than it ought to be that it has to be accounted at least a partial failure.

The main problem is that none of the strands from a multi-faceted situation becomes a main theme. The story of a teacher who has come from England to teach at an "exclusive" Ontario boys' school in the 1920s touches on such issues as the young man's pacifism, his befriending of a shy boy, his involvement with two women and his guarded welcome by a somewhat stuffy and insular com-

munity. All of this is mildly interesting but everything remains mild through lack of a forward thrust or sense of strong momentum. I would rather not blame Ratch Wallace's script, which seems very sincere and which contains some excellent dialogue, but he hasn't really provided enough to back up Alan Bridges' sensitive direction, or some very willing actors, or the first-rate period reconstruction and color photography. Sorry to say it, Ratch, but you didn't quite bring it off this time.

The title **Ragtime Summer** (adopted at a late stage of the project) is perhaps misleading; there's not much blazing or "hot" about the season shown. **Summer Rain** (the original label) comes closer to suggesting the moody, muted emotions of the story. Rain itself doesn't feature in the drama, however, so it's remarkable how well the shooting covers up the teeming sheets of precipitation which really did fall on the Lakefield area during production in the summer of '76.

As suggested, the players do well by the picture, the less experienced as much as David Warner, playing an Englishman - or Honor Blackman, as a Canadian - in the slightly shadowy leading roles. In particular, Tim Henry makes a strong impression in admittedly the most interesting role, that of a young man poised uncertainly between loutishness and likeability and coming down, through his very "ordinariness", on the debit side. Mr. Henry joins Kenneth Welsh (from **Brethren**) at the head of my personal list of Canadian actors who should star, not just appear occasionally, in Canadian films.

Clive Denton

REVIEWS OF SHORT FILMS

Step by Step

d: Terry Burke, **ph:** Mark Irwin, **ed:** Terry Burke, **sd:** Bryan Day, **sd. re-rec:** Tony Van Den Anker, **p. asst:** Carol Street, **p.c.:** Film Arts, **col:** color, 16mm, **running time:** 13 minutes, 50 seconds, **dist:** Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre.

Although I don't know the circumstances behind this production, it seems to me that **Step by Step** might have benefitted from being a longer film. Its subject is certainly a fascinating one – mine – but in its present form, **Step by Step** seems slightly hampered by a large conception trying to fit into a short time-frame. Very specifically, the filmmakers are here exploring the work of Paul Gaulin and the National Mime Theatre Performers. The film attempts to combine footage of the group in rehearsal, shot in a kind of cinéma-vérité style, with more formally photographed sequences of the group's performances, shot largely with an immobile camera from a fixed distance. In my view, the combination of styles is somewhat ineffective here because the sequences in combination seem arbitrary. For example, the rehearsal scenes of the troupe working on a rowing routine do not lead into a later, more formally shot presentation of that specific performance. Rather, there is a stark division between what we see rehearsed (and its style of shooting) and what we see performed. The selection of material does not seem based on a clear organizing principle or structure. The result, for me, was a rather disjointed experience in which questions and interests raised in certain portions of the film were not answered or echoed in others.

However, one very effective part of the film belies my generality. We are shown the manner in which the troupe's "neutral masks" are pre-



Striking a pose in **Step by Step**

pared, and then we see the extremely powerful performance in which they are used, with troupe members wearing them in various ways, some on the backs of their heads, some on both front and back, so that the human figure takes on surprising and sometimes grotesque distortions.

All of the performance sequences serve admirably to convey the exquisite work of the National Mime Theatre Performers, and the film certainly deserves to be seen if just for these portions alone. The publicity leaflet for the film explains that Paul

Gaulin has studied at the rival Parisian mime schools of both Etienne Decroux and Marcel Marceau, returning to Canada in 1973 to establish his own company. The selection of routines for the camera suggests the wide range of material which this company has developed, from the simply costumed and familiar conception of "The Windowwashers" to the Japanese Kabuki-influenced "The Forger of Swords". Although **Step by Step** doesn't inform us as clearly as it seems intended to about the process by which a mime troupe or a given routine develops, it does provide us with some of the incredibly beautiful results.

Joyce Nelson

Portrait of Christine

d: Elizabeth MacCallum, **ph:** Mark Irwin, **sd:** Bryan Day, **p.c.:** Film Arts, **col:** color 16mm, **running time:** 25 minutes, **dist:** Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre.

This film, like its subject Christine, is full of pleasant surprises. Starting with a sequence of Christine riding on horseback, we learn through voice-over interview that she has been handicapped from infancy because of a spinal disease. Clearly, Christine has not allowed her disability to prevent her from living fully, and the film reflects her energy through its quickly paced action sequences and its vivid color. Though her doctors had predicted that Christine would never walk, she has accomplished this and so much more that she is an inspiring subject. And yet the film does not attempt to mask the pain and frustrations of being handicapped. Christine speaks openly about her own problems and feelings, at times relating them directly to the attitudes towards the handicapped which are prevalent in our society. However, her tone is never bitter or accusatory. Rather, she explains in a warm, gentle way just what needs the handicapped have: the importance of exercise, the real necessity for "the opportunity of risk".



Christina at work

Director Elizabeth MacCallum has made good use of Christine's role as a community development worker for the March of Dimes. By filming her at work, MacCallum is able to include scenes in which Christine talks very openly with other handicapped women. Since she herself is not bound to a wheelchair, Christine asks one woman, "How would you cook a meal from a wheelchair?" and to another woman she says quite frankly, "I'm surprised you even had children," which prompts her disabled friend to describe the kind of family cooperation involved. There is a natural ease in these conversations, due largely to the sincere sensitivity of Christine.

Portrait of Christine is both great sense of joy. The filmmakers have selected situations involving warm and close human interaction, and settings alive with vibrant colors. There are several memorable sequences: Christine reading a story to four lovely little neighborhood children, who then help her to walk to the table for a snack; a happy, unself-conscious dance in a gym, which is so delightful for its participants' prowess that it must be seen.

The film is intended for all age levels. It might be a particularly useful choice for a primary-school audience, that is, for children who often have fears and curiosity about the handicapped they see on the street, but who too frequently get no direct answers from their embarrassed parents. *Portrait of Christine* is both life-affirming and gently instructive, a fine combination.

Joyce Nelson

Waubashene

d. John Gould, ph. John Griffin, ed. Roger Pyke, m. Andrew Duesdury, p. John Griffin and John Gould, p.c., Gesture Productions, 1977. Running time for **Waubashene Faces**, 6 minutes. Running time for **Waubashene**, 25 minutes.

We have known, since Lumière, that the image on a screen can reveal the unexpected poetry of the quotidian; that film artistry can effectively suggest some movement of the inner life that casts a radiance on the experience of ordinary things. Just so, does the work of John Gould and John Griffin in two fine short films, **Waubashene** and **Waubashene Faces**, illustrate the validity of this peculiar potential of the cinema to make everyday objects bear witness to the texture and fabric of the human generations whose creations they are!

Both films depend greatly for their success on Gould's unique application of drawing to film. Central to his drawing is the expressiveness of the human face and the films achieve both mood and cadence through the employment of dissolves which superimpose facial image upon receding facial image in simulation of a descending arc of time and motion that suggests the evanescence of all human life. What remains when the delicacy of Gould's brush stroke is absent are the filmed, homely accoutrements of the lives of those pencilled faces, the relics of a lifetime lived in the agrarian backwater of a small mid-Ontario town.

All the images and the sounds are evocative in particular, of the flatness of the rural Ontario idiom. There is no mistaking this distinctly Canadian village for **Our Town's** "Grover's Corners". The sounds give it away. Pride in heritage is simply and unabashedly announced in big round numbers by a female *Waubashene* booster as she cites the town's lineage in terms of the Iroquois wars it survived. Indeed, memory is the mainstay of most of the citizenry and a sharp sense of recall points to a remembrance of vanished charm with which the films deal in a series of yellowed snapshots that fix, forever in still frame, a series of ancient bakery wagons, an even earlier Model-T Ford, and dray horses in tandem hitch, posed with their owners in front of the town hostelry.

Yesteryear is clearly the focus, not only of the "faces" of *Waubashene*

but of the sensibility, of her cinematic chronologers as well. A muted saxophone evokes a 40s swing-band era with Friday-night dances down at the open-air pavilion on the water; for the rest — a musical accompaniment appropriately nostalgic to match a prevailing mood of reverie (annoyingly unchanging, one notices after a time).

The films are nicely crafted mood pieces, successful in their intercutting of artwork, still-photograph and live-action sequences. Though slender in terms of ambiance, these short films achieve most in the realization of texture and tone, which is what they are crafted to do.

Waubashene Face (6 minutes) was one of six Canadian shorts recently shown in Montreal during the Olympic Games as part of COJO's Cultural Olympics. Its companion piece, **Waubashene** (25 minutes) is to be seen on the CBC Network.

Alice Smith

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